

The ERRAND BOY of ANDREW JACKSON



A WAR STORY of 1814
W. O. STODDARD

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(See page 266.)

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By W. O. STODDARD

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"Guert Ten Eyck" "Chuck Purdy" etc.

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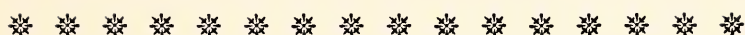
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CHAPTER I

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

“**Y**OU’LL never get a better rifle, Dan. It’s hard on me that I can’t carry it this time. You must go in my place.”

“But, father, what if General Jackson won’t take me? What if he should say I’m too young?”

“Don’t you be afraid of that, my boy. There were just such chaps as you at the Horse Shoe Bend battle. We whipped the Red Stick Creeks to death, too.”

“I want to go,” said Dan, “but who’s to

take care of the farm? You can't. Jim can't — "

"Yes, I can," eagerly piped a younger voice. "Mother and I and the girls. Father's going to get well — "

"Mother?" said Dan, inquiringly.

A pair of plump, bare arms went suddenly around his neck, and his face was covered with kisses before any more words were spoken.

"Oh, mother," he said to her, "I want to go — "

"Dan! Dan!" she exclaimed. "I don't want you to go, and I do. You must go! General Jackson must have every last rifle that's left in Tennessee, if he's to beat off the British at New Orleans."

A little group stood a few paces in front of a large, well-built log house. A road passed by, a hundred yards away, and from it a lane came to the door between borders of dense bushes. Beyond the road, the lane passed on between a wheat stubble field on one side and a pasture on the other. In the latter were horses and cattle feeding, and

a small flock of sheep. Beyond the fields, which were wide, the land arose in a high, forest-crowned hill. Behind the house were barns, outbuildings, corn-cribs, haystacks, and beyond these were fields of luxuriant corn, reaching to the bank of a narrow, swiftly running river.

It all wore an exceedingly peaceful appearance, but at that hour there was no peace anywhere upon all the long border of the thirty-years-old republic of the United States. On land and water, on its ravaged frontiers, on its northern lakes, and on the salt sea, the nation was fighting for its rights and for its very life.

Up to the door of Captain Martin's house, that morning, a neighbor had ridden with tremendous news from Nashville. That is, it came by way of the state capital, but part of it had travelled far to get there. From across the ocean had come the tidings that the empire of Napoleon Bonaparte had fallen, and that the armies of the other powers were in possession of Paris and of France.

To Europe, to all the world beyond the

Atlantic, this had been of vast importance, but what special meaning could it have to the plain farmer settlers of Tennessee, Kentucky, and the American Southwest?

Every man of them knew, as soon as he heard it. The long delay in the sailing of the great British expedition for the capture of New Orleans and the Mississippi Valley would soon be over. General Pakenham's army was now free to come, and, unless it should be defeated, the United States would shortly lose forever all the territory purchased from the French emperor by Thomas Jefferson. With the great river and its harbor mouth would necessarily go the freedom of Kentucky and Tennessee, and so the men of the West took down their rifles and began to mould bullets as soon as they heard the news. They did so, moreover, because with it came the announcement that their trusted leader, Andrew Jackson, had been appointed a major general in the regular army, with full power to raise troops and to do as he might choose with them. At the same time, it was well understood that the government

at Washington was able to send him very little more than his commission and his authority. Troops, or arms, or money, were not then at the disposal of President Madison.

General Jackson had but recently finished his terrific campaign against the Red Stick Creeks, the hardest fighters of all the tribes of the red men. He was now at Nashville, wishing sadly that he still had with him the forces which had been so worn out, so thinned and shattered in battles and marches among the Southern forests. His list of killed and wounded had been large, considering the numbers engaged, and much worse than this had been his sick list. It was, therefore, at once evident that he must now gather a new and larger army, made up only in part of his old veterans.

He must have men for the New Orleans campaign, men by the thousand, to meet the thousands of England. Where were they to be obtained, among the small and scattered settlements of the harried and depleted Western frontier? It looked as if he were to have few indeed, unless he could draw at

least one man from each household. Even if he were to do that, his new army would be less than half as numerous as that with which he was to contend, for General Pakenham was reported to be bringing with him fifteen thousand of the best troops of the British army. The raw militia of America were expected to face and defeat the iron regiments which had broken the power of the great French emperor. Mere volunteers, untrained, almost unofficered, were to contend with the victorious heroes of the hardest fought battles of the Old World.

To the eyes of military critics, especially to European war prophets, the idea was an utter absurdity; but it did not seem so to Andrew Jackson and the riflemen who had fought and beaten the hard-dying Creek warriors. No men on earth had ever more absolutely and desperately refused to surrender than had the brave savages who died at Horse Shoe Bend.

Leaning heavily upon the rude crutch under his left arm, Captain Martin stood in front of his doorway, holding out and exam-

ining admiringly a long-barrelled rifle. It carried a flint-lock, of course, it was stocked to the muzzle, it might be somewhat heavy, but it was evidently in good condition. Naturally enough, with so much war news on his mind, the captain was thinking of the things he had done with that weapon. Up it came to his shoulder, and he glanced along the barrel as if he were taking aim at a spot some distance down the lane from the road.

"Dan," he said, "you were a little chap then. You don't remember about it. Right there they were, when we sighted 'em. We fought 'em all night, afterward, from the house, but I dropped one of 'em, just there by the sumachs, with this same shootin' iron. It's a long range, but I took him."

"I can do it," said Dan, in whose young face fierce flushes were coming and going. "I hit a deer, once, as far as that."

"There were six of us at sunset," continued his father, lowering his gun. "Next morning there were only three, but we beat 'em off. Your grandmother was alive then.

She took Tom Atley's gun, when he went down, and she fought like a tiger. So did your mother."

Other stories followed rapidly upon that memory of the old Indian war days. It came out among them, that Captain Martin's father had been with Washington from Valley Forge to Yorktown, and that the captain himself had been born in a camp. He had been an early settler in Tennessee. This house and all the region around it swarmed with legends of hard fighting, and among these Dan had grown up, as far as he had grown, and with them he had heard many a thrilling story of Washington's campaigns. It was just so with his younger brother, Jim, and the fourteen-years-old borderer had now obtained possession of the rifle, to strut up and down with it, shouldered soldier fashion.

Mrs. Martin looked at him mournfully for a moment, and then she said:—

"O dear! He, too, will be in the army, some day. Come, girls! I wish there wasn't any war."

She and her two daughters went on into

the house, and Dan and his father followed them. The room they entered was not by any means a small one, and it contained many tokens of frontier prosperity. The furniture, what there was of it, was pretty good for that time and place. On the walls hung, however, instead of pictures or other works of art, a number of antlers of deer. Upon these, as hooks, rested muskets, fowling-pieces, fishing-rods, and from them hung bullet-pouches, powder-horns, pistols, and hunting-knives. From one huge pair of horns, moreover, dangled in its sheath the sword which belonged to Captain Martin's rank in the service, side by side with a long, crooked sabre inherited from his Old Continental father. With these, making the three a splendid trophy of family patriotism, hung a shorter, broader, heavier blade, which had been cut down from an old mill-saw by Mrs. Martin's father, for he had been one of Marion's men in the Revolutionary War days of South Carolina.

The architecture of the house was that of the frontier. A large central cabin had at

first been built, fortlike, of long and heavy logs. On the back side of this was a huge chimney, made of sticks and tempered clay. It had two fireplaces, one being in the main room, while the other, of smaller size, was housed over by an ample addition which served as a kitchen. At some later day, other additions had been made at the right and left, so that the house had now four good bedrooms on its lower floor, while the loft over the main room supplied another, to be reached by a ladder spiked against the wall. A hand loom stood, instead of a piano, in one corner of the parlor-sitting-room-dining-room, and by it were two spinning-wheels and a reel, but they were just now out of employment.

It was evidently near supper time, for the table was spread. The crockery was of the plainest ware, but there was the rare luxury in Tennessee of a tablecloth. The Martins were not poor, therefore, and they might some day become rich, for several hundred acres of the splendid forest land around them were all their own.

Captain Martin limped slowly to his place at one end of the table, taking up the carving knife and fork as if he were about to attack a fat haunch of roasted venison that lay before him. He suddenly put them down, however, for his wife, who had dropped into her chair at the other end of the table, bowed her head upon her hands. That was what he himself did, for a long silent minute, and when he looked up again, he said:—

“Helen, Helen! God will surely take care of Dan. He took care of me—”

“Yes, John,” she whispered. “I hope he will. I can’t help remembering, though. Once, when I was a little girl, father came back from one of Marion’s fights with Tarleton’s cavalry. My oldest brother, Bob, didn’t come home with him. I can see my mother’s face, now, as she looked out and saw father leading Bob’s horse—”

There she stopped as if something were choking her, and her husband said soothingly, but with a tremor in his voice:—

“Helen, dear, Dan’ll come home again.”

She might be a soldier’s daughter and a

soldier's wife, but it was very hard, after all, to be also a soldier's mother, and her young rifleman only sixteen years of age.

He sat there, now, beside his brother Jim, while across the table the two girls, Polly and Jessie, were staring at him with tears in their eyes. Perhaps they were thinking that he was handsome, but he was not, except to them and to his mother. He was a tall, slender, wiry-looking fellow, with curling light brown hair and gray-blue eyes. His face was sunburned and freckled. His hands were large and brown. His dress consisted of a home-made blue jeans shirt and buckskin leggings, and it was a matter of course that his feet were bare in summer time. If he were going to town or into the army, however, he would probably be decked out also in a buckskin hunting shirt, moccasins, and a coonskin cap.

Dan Martin, therefore, was neither stylish nor handsome, but there was a peculiar glitter in his eyes which gave to his face an expression or character very different from that of many other boys. It was likely that some-

thing of the family history and war inheritance had gone into the face of a youngster who had never yet hunted in his own woods or fished in his own creek without keeping a half unconscious watch against possible hostile Indians. His father and mother and their friends who came to visit at the house had also given him a kind of education in war and adventure, such as hardly any other set of men and women could have given. It would have been a wonder if among them they had not filled his busy brain with feverish imaginations of heroic things which he was yet to do himself.

Mrs. Martin recovered herself, to lift her head and look at Dan; her husband began to carve, with steady courage; while Jim, a smaller pattern of his elder brother, remarked:—

“It’s too bad that I can’t go!”

“You’ve the farm to look after,” said Dan.

“Well,” said Jim, “I can shoot. If I was half a head taller, they’d take me. Dan’s as long as some grown-up men.”

“I’ve seen some pretty short-legged sol-

diers," said his father, trying to be cheerful. "Oh, how I wish my leg were well! It's healing."

"Father," said Mrs. Martin, "that isn't all. What will he do for money? He must have some. Not a dollar of cash on hand."

"I've thought of that," said her husband. "Dan can ride the red colt to Nashville. He may sell him there for whatever he can get. That'll be money enough. Soldiers go into a campaign without any money. I've had to do it."

"Well," said she, "I can't bear to have him go unprovided. You can't guess what'll happen. I'm afraid horses are not selling very well, just now."

"Well!" said Captain Martin, "he must do the best he can. He can have some ammunition to start with, and he can buy more there."

"Bullets?" exclaimed Jessie. "Why, father, Polly and I've been running bullets all the afternoon, while you were asleep and the boys were in the corn-field. His pouch is as full as he'll want to carry it."

“Hurrah!” replied her father. “You girls’d make as good soldiers as your mother.”

They were showing plenty of war spirit, at all events. Part of it came out in vigorous promises to do all the work on the farm that Dan could have done, so that his absence should have no effect on the crops, the horses, or the cattle. They were handsome, if their brothers were not, and could assert truthfully their ability to catch and saddle and ride any horse on that farm.

The evening went by in talks about the Creek Indian campaign, about General Harrison’s victories in Ohio and Canada, about Commodore Perry’s wonderful feats on Lake Erie, about other events of the war with England, on land and sea; but all their thoughts, at last, seemed to drift down the Mississippi River.

Captain Martin was evidently well acquainted with the old Spanish-French settlement which now bore the name of New Orleans, and with all the country around it. Whatever he knew he was ready to turn over

to Dan, to help him and Jackson fight the British army.

“Most of the folks there talk French to this day,” he said, “as much as they do English, or more. I’m glad you’ve picked up some French, already, from your mother and me, but you’d better lay in as much more as you can. Didn’t you get some from Black Sam while he was working here?”

“I reckon I did,” said Dan. “That darky can talk almost anything, but he isn’t good for much else.”

“He’s an awful fighter,” said the captain. “I wish a regiment just like him were going along with Jackson.”

“Sam knows New Orleans, too,” said Mrs. Martin. “He’s been everywhere, but nobody can guess what part of the country he came from.”

“I don’t know,” growled her husband. “I’ve a notion he wouldn’t care to be seen again in Maryland. Somebody up there lost a field hand, one day, and didn’t think it was worth while to follow him down into Florida among the Seminoles.”

It was later than usual when the Martin family went to bed, but they were up and stirring at an early hour next morning. All the older members, one after another, as soon as they made their appearance, inquired:—

“Where’s Dan?”

Nobody could tell, at first, but, even before breakfast was ready, he and Jim came to the front door, leading a large, fine-looking bay horse.

“All ready, Dan?” shouted his father. “Well, I can’t spare you a saddle—”

“Don’t want one,” said Dan. “I can sell him or ride him, just as well, bareback.”

“That’s so,” replied his father. “Anything else you want you can buy in Nashville—Hullo!”

“I declare!” exclaimed Mrs. Martin, in the doorway. “If it isn’t Black Sam!”

“I thought the sheriff was after him,” said Polly. “Why, mother, he’ll be caught and locked up if he’s found anywhere around here. He’s awful!”

CHAPTER II

THE ROAD TO NASHVILLE

COMING out from among the bushes at the head of the lane, from the road to the house, was a shape which would have been voted remarkable anywhere, and all the Martin family turned out to see it come.

"Cap'n Martin," called out a deep, mellow voice, "I'se heerd the news. Are ye gwine to jine Jackson? I is!"

"I'm too lame yet," loudly responded the captain. "Dan's going in my place."

"He kin shoot," said the new arrival, with a grin which displayed a terrific range of very white teeth. "I'd go 'long wid him, but I hain't got no hoss to go on. I'll hev to foot it."

He was not a tall man, but he was very broad-shouldered, while his arms and legs seemed out of all proportion for their length. A man with such lower limbs might be a fast walker, and, with such arms and hands, he

might reach for and pull in almost anything. His head also was large, and his coal-black skin had an appearance of being drawn tight to the skull, so that it could hardly wrinkle, except in one deep crease in the middle of his low, retreating forehead. His nose was flat and his eyes were sunken. Therefore, taking him just as he stood, he was an exceedingly ugly, if not ferocious-looking, black man. It might have been not unlikely that any owner of such a human chattel, having also common sense, had been at least halfway willing to lose him. Captain Martin, himself, had declared roundly:—

“Own him? I’d as lief own a wolf!”

His rig, what there was of it, consisted mainly of a ragged jeans-shirt and time-worn buckskin leggings. He had no shoes, and there was no hat upon the gray-black wool of his head. At his belt hung a sheath, which, for length, might have contained a carving-knife, but in it was really an old, flat, blacksmith’s file, ground to an edge and point, and fitted with a buckhorn haft. He had a bullet-pouch and powder-horn slung

over his shoulder, and he carried in his left hand a short, heavy-barrelled rifle, with a flint-lock twice as large as the one on the weapon which Jim was holding, ready for Dan to take.

"Come in and get your breakfast, Sam," said Mrs. Martin. "Dan's going to set out right away."

"No, thank ye, ma'am," said Sam, bowing very politely. "I's had a feed. I mustn't stop nowhar till I git to Nashville. Dan'll hev to foller the road, and I'll cut 'cross t'rough the woods. Most likely, he'll git thar pretty nigh as soon as I will. Dat's a good hoss."

A laugh that was almost a yell burst from his wide, wolfish mouth, as he whirled upon his feet with a quickness of motion that was enough to make one shudder. Another fierce, unhuman scream, or laugh, whichever it might be, followed a few moments later, not toward the road, but in a beeline for the nearest forest.

"There he goes," said Captain Martin. "He'll swim any river, pick his way through

any swamp, climb any mountain, and he can tire out a horse. He's a wild beast, but he's one of the right sort for Jackson."

They all went into the house then, and seemed inclined to be silent. Hardly had breakfast been eaten, however, when good Mrs. Martin pushed her chair from the table and knelt beside it. So they all did, and not a sound could be heard, except a sob and a low murmur, until she arose again.

"Daniel," she said, "kiss me good-by. I know you'll do your duty. I can bear it."

Dan's arms were around her tightly for a moment, and his answer did him credit.

"Why, mother," he said, "I won't get killed. What I've been worrying about is you and the farm and the crops."

"We'll take care of them," said both of the girls and Jim, all speaking at once, and Captain Martin added:—

"Farm? Crops? What'd we care for them, if there were British flags a-flying at New Orleans and Nashville? That's what we're going to have to see, unless Pakenham's army's whipped. But England can't

send troops enough to take and hold the river country. She's making a big mistake."

It was no time for further talk, and Dan walked out, followed by the rest. Jim unhitched the bay colt, as they called him, although he was six years old, and in an instant his young rider was mounted. A knapsack containing cooked rations for two days was handed up and slung at his back. His rifle, pouch, and powder-horn followed, and then Dan was carrying a pretty heavy load, for the bullets were many, and the rifle was not a light one.

"Good-by, Dan! Go and take your father's place. Do your duty!"

That was the last farewell that he heard, as the light-footed bay horse bounded away down the lane, and the rest of the Martin family stood still and stared after him until he was out of sight.

"Hurrah!" he shouted, as he wheeled out into the main road. "I'm going to join General Jackson's army!"

A feeling of fierce exhilaration seemed to have come upon him. He had said his

good-bys lovingly enough, but now he was not thinking of the old log house, so haunted and filled with old war legends and memories. He was going away from all that, out into the world; out among camps and forts and fighting men; out into battles and victories, such as nobody in all that part of the world had ever seen before. He seemed to himself to have grown several years older, since the war news came to the house.

The people in that, older and younger, were still thinking of him, but somehow or other they were not talking much about him. Every now and then, however, as the day went on, his mother would go to the open door and look wistfully down the road. Then, more than once, Polly or Jessie would go and put an arm around her and kiss her, without saying much. As for Jim, he seemed to be all over the farm without doing any great amount of work in any one place, and after dinner he listened eagerly while his father told him the history of the swords which hung from the deer antlers on the wall. He had heard it all before, doubtless,

but now, while it was told, his thoughts could more feverishly travel away along the Nashville road, hunting for a freckle-faced boy on a fine bay horse.

The day went by, and another night was drawing slowly nearer. It was hot weather for anything like rapid travelling, but the narrow road upon which Dan Martin was riding was shaded by the giant trees of a forest in which no woodman's axe had been heard since that highway was opened. Even at that time only a few trees had been cut out, here and there, to have a track wide enough for wagon wheels, and Dan was justified in asserting:—

“It's as crooked as a ram's horn. Father says it just about doubles the distance. Anyhow, I've made a long trail to-day. I reckon I must be more'n halfway to Nashville.”

He may have been right about that, but, however fast and far he had ridden, the remarkably good horse under him showed few signs of weariness. Dan spoke of that, but what he was now looking for was a running stream and a patch of grass for the bay to feed on.

“He had an hour’s rest at noon,” he said. “But he’ll want a good long one now. Find a house? No, I don’t care to sleep in any house. I’m one of General Jackson’s men. I’ll camp. ’T wont be the first time, either, that I’ve slept in the woods. — Hullo! That’s it! I’m fixed.”

He had been ascending a long, low hill, from the crest of which, as he now went over it, he saw the road go down to the border of a narrow brook, over which there was no bridge. On the other side was a natural meadow of several acres, such as were common in the Tennessee woods. They were greatly valued by new settlers, as giving them so much cleared land to begin with, without any need for tree-chopping.

The bay stepped forward more briskly as soon as he saw that water, and in a few minutes his nose was in it, while his rider sat still and looked around him.

“Well!” he exclaimed. “I reckon I know this place. They told me of it. Right over yonder there was a skirmish with the redskins once. Father was in it, and he and his

men killed a lot of 'em. He says he reckons their war parties didn't come in again as far as this, after that whipping. I hope so. I don't care to be on the lookout for 'em, just now. I'm tired."

The horse drank freely and walked on, and he was not pulled in until he reached the edge of the woods on the farther side of the meadow.

"I won't camp by the run," said Dan. "Father said there was a good spring, here-away. There were ten men killed, red and white, around that spring. There it is too."

It was a very pretty spring, bubbling up at one side of a glassy pool from which a little rill went out; and Dan dismounted to get a cool drink for himself, and to get rid of his burdens. He tethered the bay at the end of a long lariat, and patted and groomed him for a minute or so. Then he left him to nibble the grass, and went to his knapsack.

"Make a fire?" he said inquiringly. "No, I don't need to kindle any fire. I guess the bears and painters and wolves'll let me alone for one night, so near the settlements."

He might have added that midsummer is not the time for any danger of attacks from wild animals, and that cattle in the fields were considered entirely safe. It was hardly so at any time, however, with sheep, and the settlers obtained what little wool they required for their home spinning only by exercising great care for the protection of their not very numerous flocks.

Not even so much as a blanket to sleep on had Dan brought with him, but he took off his buckskin hunting-shirt and moccasins. He was not accustomed to wearing so much in hot weather. Moreover, he was willing to take especial care of so very fine a hunting-shirt as had been made for him by his mother and sisters. Their skill had also been shown in the making of his trim, well-fitting coonskin cap, but his beaded moccasins had been purchased of a Cherokee squaw by Black Sam and then traded to Mrs. Martin for bacon.

Dan lay down full length at the foot of a tall oak, after eating nearly all that was left of his cooked rations. The shadows were

deepening and the air was getting cooler, for there was a breeze at work among the tree-tops. It was one of the best places in all the world for a young soldier to lie and think. At first his thoughts went back to the home he had left, and he almost seemed to himself to see them at the supper table. He was quite sure, too, that they were thinking of him; but his mind turned away from the household group in the cabin to wander off after General Jackson and his army, and after the great fleet and all the British regiments which it was bringing over to capture the Mississippi River valley.

"I'd like to see that fleet," he said to himself. "I never saw anything bigger'n a canoe or flatboat. I'll get a look at those ships, if I can, though, after our army reaches New Orleans."

Suddenly, with a spring like that of a startled deer, he was on his feet, reaching out for his rifle, that was leaning against the tree. He had heard a sound like the snapping of a dry twig under a heavy foot, and all his forest training bade him to be ready for a pos-

sible enemy. He was behind the tree, rifle in hand and cocked, when a low, grating, mocking laugh, came from the direction of the breaking twig.

"All right, Massa Dan. It ain't no Injin dis time, dough. Sam's done foun' ye."

"Hullo! Sam, is that you?" replied Dan. "Come along. Who's with you?"

"Nobody ain't wid me," chuckled Sam, as he came striding nearer. "I reckoned yo'd camp by dis yer spring. Why hasn't yo' built no fiah? Nebber sleep in de woods wid a hoss and no fiah."

"I didn't reckon I wanted one," said Dan.

"Yes, yo' does, den," insisted Sam, and he at once proceeded to gather fuel, without any further explanations.

Dan watched him curiously, for Sam did not make his heap of sticks and bark near the spring. He selected a spot fifty yards away, and it was remarkable how quickly he kindled a blaze with flint and steel. As soon as he had done so, he went and tethered the bay colt about halfway between the fire and the tree where Dan had been lying.

"I understand, I reckon," thought Dan. "Now I can see him, whenever I wake up. It looks like some old Indian warpath notion."

"Massa Dan," said Sam, "I jist didn't reckon yo'd catch up wid me so soon as dis. I hope yo' hasn't run yer hoss too hard."

"He's all right," said Dan. "But what I want most is a good long sleep."

Down he lay again, and Black Sam threw himself on the grass a few paces nearer the horse. Dan asked him several questions about his swift tramp across country, but Sam kept up an old reputation that he had for never telling where he had been or what he had seen. Before long, therefore, both of them were sound asleep. The last idea to fade out of the mind of Dan, however, was a strong suspicion that his black friend had not told him all of his reasons for making what still seemed to be an almost needless fire. His next thought came to him long hours afterwards. He did not, indeed, know whether the time passed had been long or short when he felt Sam's hand upon his shoulder, and heard him whisper:—

“Massa Dan! Wake up! Lie still! Watch out! Git yo’ gun ready.”

Dan silently did so, for it lay at his side now, and it was in his hand when he cautiously turned over to watch the movements of his strange comrade. The negro lay flat without any movement at all for a moment. The woods were silent, except for the low, mysterious murmur which always fills the forest air at night. The fire, out there on the edge of the open, was burning low, but it still sent out a dull, red glare among the shadows. The horse was on his feet and was pawing the ground as if something had made him restive.

“Hist!” whispered Sam. “See ’im? He’s come for de hoss!”

In an instant Dan was alone, for Sam crept away like a snake, disappearing among the trees and undergrowth. There was no other living thing to be seen but the bay, and Dan lay still, watching him, with his rifle levelled in that direction.

“It can’t be an Indian,” he was all but thinking aloud, when he saw a tall shape

arise out of the grass a few paces from the sapling to which the bay was tethered.

"'Tisn't Black Sam," he thought. "Where is he?"

No, not Sam. It was a taller, thinner man, wearing a buckskin shirt and a broad-brimmed straw hat, and he at once began to unfasten the colt.

By all the laws of the frontier, Dan Martin had a right to shoot that man, caught in the act of stealing a horse in the woods. A shot might have missed, however, in that uncertain light, and once more Dan showed the effect of his education, his long training in the wisdom of the woods. He knew that it must be best not to interfere with the plans of such a fellow as Black Sam, and all he at once did was to arise and go swiftly on from tree to tree, toward the open. He was a number of paces nearer when he saw the stranger begin to put a bridle upon the head of his prize, and his anger was almost too much for his prudence. Up came his rifle.

"I can hit him now," he thought. "I will, too, if Sam doesn't get there. — Agh!"

His loud, involuntary exclamation came just in time to make the thief turn his head, so that he lost his chance for seeing Black Sam arise from the grass on the other side of the horse. It was only a delay of a moment that was gained, however, and the bay might have had a strange rider if Sam had not been so very near and so quick. There was not even time for the thief to lift his gun, and he dropped it to face Sam with a dirk in his hand.

"Will ye give up, or won't ye?" fiercely demanded Sam, springing forward.

"Not to any nigger," scornfully responded the robber. "Drop that knife!"

It was a curious illustration of the then existing social conditions and ideas, but most black men would have instantly obeyed. Hardly a slave in Tennessee would have taken the responsibility of fighting a well-dressed white man. Black Sam, however, was not a slave and he was not an ordinary negro. His only reply was a loud, mocking laugh, as the robber grappled him. No doubt the latter was a man of desperate courage,

and he might also have been a strong and dangerous fighter. He was nearly by a head the taller of the two. For some reason, Sam had dropped his gun, and in his hand was the long, keen-edged file-knife. Many years afterward, the famous Colonel James Bowie made for himself precisely such a knife, and with it he gained the reputation which gave his name to a multitude of all sorts of sharp weapons.

Dan was now coming at a run, but he saw a large, black hand catch the robber's wrist, above the dirk-handle, and he exclaimed:—

“Sam's got him! I'll catch the colt!”

It would have been a serious disaster to his part of General Jackson's army to have allowed that spirited animal to get away into the woods. Dan caught him in the nick of time, for the bay was getting frightened, but when he turned his head for another look at the two combatants, only one of them was standing.

CHAPTER III

THE SALE OF THE BAY COLT

"SAM, are you hurt?" asked Dan, excitedly, as he pulled his rearing colt around and tried to get nearer.

"No, Massa Dan," said Black Sam, coolly. "I isn't hurt a mite, but I jist had to kill him. It's ole Bill Jeckler, the mountain hoss thief. I seed him on the road, yesterday, an' I done watch out for him. He's gone dead now."

"Couldn't you have tied him, if I'd ha' come to help?" asked Dan.

"Dunno," growled Sam. "Fact is, Massa Dan, he's laid out more'n one feller 'at tried to bring him in. It aint bes' to fool too long wid a debbil. So! Dar's a reward o' fifty dollars foh him, in Nashville, dead or alive. I's right down glad yo' was along w'en I killed him. Yo' kin witness foh me."

"I can do that," said Dan, staring down upon the heavily bearded face of the slain

desperado. "I've heard the worst kind of things of his doing. He was as cruel as a Creek Indian. He was a horse thief and a murderer."

"Jes' so," said Sam, "an' he didn't keer much w'ot he murdered. Yo' hole on, a bit. I'd bes' go an' hunt foh de hoss he was ridin'. Mos' likely dah's a reward foh dat, too. I reckon Bill Jeckler nebber bought a critter an' paid foh it, in all his life."

He could, at all events, be very sure that the Nashville authorities would take charge of any animal found in the possession of a noted outlaw.

"Hark!" he exclaimed. "Dah he is!"

It was so, for a shrill neigh in the woods, not too far away to be heard, helped him to go and find what he was after. In a few minutes he came back to the fire, leading with him a good-looking brown mare, saddled and bridled.

"I's got her, Massa Dan," he chuckled, "but I jes' don' know whose barn she was took out on. I's got to ride all de way to Nashville, now."

That may have meant that he would have preferred walking.

"Hitch her," said Dan. "Then we'd better lie down and sleep till sun up."

"Reckon not," replied Sam, as he knelt beside the fallen desperado, searching his pockets and removing his belt and weapons. "You's on'y a boy, yit, or yo' wouldn't talk o' loafin' any too nigh dis yer."

"He's dead," said Dan.

"Jes' so," said Sam, "or yo' an' I'd be as dead as he is. I'll git on de mare an' I wont 'top dis side o' Nashville. Yo' lead yer own hoss on a good bit an' go into de woods. Don' lie dah any too long, nuther. Any man's a fool to git his t'roat cut. Bill Jeckler hed frien's an' dey was a good deal like him."

"I reckon that's so," said Dan. "I wish we could have taken him alive."

"Take de debbil!" exclaimed the black man, and he went on to explain, with some earnestness, as if excusing himself to all white men, that the mountain outlaws were in the habit of taking vengeance for a capture, even more than for a killing.

Then he was in the saddle which Bill Jeckler would never use again, and he was galloping fast along the Nashville road. Dan understood that Sam must get as far as possible before broad daylight. A negro, mounted on such a horse and carrying such weapons, was quite likely to be called to account by any party of armed white men meeting him.

"I reckon," thought Dan, "he won't be interfered with much by any feller that hasn't his rifle with him. Anyhow, there isn't much o' this night left."

There may have been a couple of hours, perhaps, if he had carried a watch to mark them with, but they were long ones. There was no sleep at all in them, even after a good hiding and pasturing place had been found, a mile or so beyond Indian Spring. Sleep? Dan now felt a great deal more like standing guard all the while, with his rifle cocked, ready for any kind of outlaws, red or white. The bay colt took a different view of the situation, for the wild blue grass at this place was of excellent quality.

“There comes the sun!” exclaimed Dan, at last, with some enthusiasm.

It was not that he actually saw any sun, in the act of rising, but that a faint tinge of yellow light began to show above some tree-tops. He had now only a few small fragments of his provisions remaining, and he was still a hungry boy after these had disappeared. His horse also would willingly have continued grazing, but it was time to saddle and mount and get away.

“Nashville!” shouted Dan, as he went out into the road. “I’ll get there to-day. Hurrah for General Jackson!”

Then he quickly tightened his rein, for hardly had his shout been uttered before it seemed to have called out an answer from somebody at no great distance down the road.

“Somebody else is up early,” thought Dan. “Wonder if it’s a friend of Bill Jeckler. Whoever it is, though, I’ll have my rifle ready. I don’t see how any of ’em could know about him so soon as this.”

He rode on, somewhat slowly, and the

answering halloo came again, nearer, clearer. About a minute later Dan saw a tall man, standing alone by the roadside, looking at a horse.

"Store clothes," muttered Dan. "Wool hat. Carries an umbrella, too. There's a big valise on the horse, behind the saddle. I reckon he's some kind of gentleman. Don't be too sure though. Horse thieves can dress well, sometimes."

The stranger was indeed dressed very well, for that time and place, and it dimly occurred to Dan's mind that there was something military about him.

"Hallo, youngster," he called out, as Dan rode up to him. "Where did you get that horse?"

"I reckon it isn't any business o' yours," sharply responded Dan, as he came to a halt. "He belongs to me. Who are you?"

"That isn't any business of yours," said the stranger, but his tone was lower, and there was no insolence in his manner. "I'll tell you, though, my boy. My name's Brown. I'm all the way from Boston, to buy land in

Tennessee. This brute of mine cast a shoe and went lame. He is of no use whatever. I'm dismounted."

"I reckon he never was worth a great deal," said Dan, looking the broken-down beast all over. "There's plenty of land for sale, mister, but not a great many horses. General Jackson is going to want 'em all for his army."

"I didn't know he had any army yet, to want horses for," said Mr. Brown, a little sarcastically. "What'll you take for that one? I've got to get a fresh mount somehow."

"He's worth more'n you'd want to pay," said Dan. "I'm taking him to Nashville, to sell him. Father said I could get more cash for him there than I could anywhere else."

"Now, boy," said Mr. Brown, "I know exactly how horses are going. You can't tell me anything. I'll give you a hundred dollars, cash down, and put my saddle right on. You can have this one, too, into the bargain."

"I don't want him," said Dan. "The crows can take him, for all o' me. But I'll

take the hundred. You can put your saddle on after you pay me the cash."

Down he sprang, rifle in hand, and stood somewhat watchfully at the head of his bay colt. The glitter in his eyes was a little brighter than usual, moreover, for here was the sale and the money he had been hoping for. It was a tremendously sudden surprise, but he did not feel like being trifled with, for all that. One of the swift thoughts in his mind was: "If he's a mountain outlaw and a horse thief, I may have to shoot him. I'm ready."

Mr. Brown, whoever or whatever he might be, seemed to understand the kind of boy he was dealing with. The price, too, was a pretty good one, as horses were going that season, and he knew that hard money can settle a great many things. He went at once and took down the valise from behind the saddle. He opened it and lifted out a small bag, but he did not for a moment lose his hold upon a handsome double-barrelled shotgun that he was armed with. The bag was heavy with coins and he took out a handful of them.



Dan sells his horse

“Gold half eagles, ninety-five dollars, silver, five dollars,” he said, as he counted the money and handed it over.

“It’s all right,” said Dan, after he also had counted it. “But four of the half eagles are English sovereigns. I know ’em. They’ll pass for five dollars apiece, though, anywhere around here.”

“We have to take what we can get, nowadays,” said Mr. Brown. “All the silver I’ve seen down here is either Mexican or Spanish. This country had better try to find a silver mine, somewhere, and some gold mines. What did you say about Jackson’s army? He can’t raise one.”

“Can’t he?” said Dan. “Well, now, just you wait and see about that. All our men aren’t dead yet.”

“My boy,” responded Mr. Brown, “his old regiments were used up in his Creek campaign. They’ve all gone home to take a rest. What’s more, the Tennessee militia won’t care to go down to the Gulf and be knocked over by British regular troops.”

Dan listened, and his eyes were beginning

to flash angrily. The money was in his pockets, now, and Mr. Brown had taken the bridle of the bay.

"Mister Brown," said Dan, "I reckon you'd better not let off much of that kind of talk around here. Say, now! If you were in a red sojer coat, at a hundred yards, wouldn't a slug from this rifle drop ye? I can take the head off a squirrel in a tree-top."

The stranger's cheeks reddened and he bit his lip, as if to keep himself from saying something that was close behind it. He made no immediate reply, however, and busied himself with a rapid transfer of his saddle, bridle, and valise to his new purchase.

Dan watched him, curiously, but could not help, at the same time, feeling of the entirely unexpected coins which he had stowed away in the pockets of his jeans shirt, under the protection of his buckskin.

"That's a splendid saddle," he was thinking, when Mr. Brown sprang into it, with the ease of a practised horseman, "but he'll get

into trouble at Nashville, if he talks in that way about Tennessee militia and the British. I wonder where he picked up any English money. He wears spurs too."

A touch of Mr. Brown's heel sent off the bay with a startled spring, and in a moment Dan was alone, preparing to make the rest of his way to Nashville on foot. Of course, his first business was to examine the animal left behind him by the gentlemanly but unpatriotic land speculator from Boston. It was a gray, of medium size, and Dan decided that it might have been a pretty good one, before being so badly lamed.

"There was a pebble got stuck in his off hind foot, I reckon," he said at last. "That fellow Brown didn't get it out soon enough. I don't know how bad the lameness is. He may get over it, after a while. I'll lead him along, slowly, anyhow, and leave him at a house, to be sent home to father. Oh, but wouldn't I like to see them all, this morning!"

CHAPTER IV

SHOOTING AT A MARK

ABOUT half a mile above what were the outskirts of the young and thriving town of Nashville, and on the bank of the Cumberland River, there was a broad, grassy level, without any fence. It had not been made a public park of, or otherwise set apart for popular uses, except for the one reason that it was a kind of no-man's-land, all the titles to it being tangled in a maze of law-suits. Here, therefore, the local militia came for parade and drill. Here, now and then, were the horse races that the Tennesseans delighted in, and here had been the temporary camp of more than one brave regiment of volunteers, on their way to deadly struggles with the red men of the woods.

There was a crowd assembled on the parade ground, not very long after Dan and Black Sam had their midnight adventure at

Indian Spring. The bank of the river, for a considerable length, had been left unoccupied, for in the middle of the open space on this side was a framework of timbers, sustaining a plank target, six feet square. In the middle of this, again, was suspended a smooth board "mark," about two feet square. Upon this was traced a black ring, a foot in diameter, around the chalked "white" of the target, and the very centre was a red spot of the size of a dollar.

During a little over two hours, after the usual Nashville breakfast time, there had been heard from this direction an almost continuous cracking of rifles, and the spirit-stirring sounds had attracted every man and boy who could get away from what he was doing, — or not doing.

There were marks on the outside planks which might indicate that not all the riflemen had been experts, but the central pad had been shot all to splinters and renewed several times. A fresh one had now been put on for a trial of skill which was arousing especial interest.

"The best man'll git a splendid pair o' belt pistols," remarked a man who was standing near the shooting line, sixty yards from the target.

"Wal, ye-es," said another. "It's to be fifteen shots, at a dollar each, and I reckon the pistols ain't wuth but ten."

"Yes, they are," replied the first speaker. "They're as good as new, every bit. But you needn't try for 'em, yourself. Not agin' them fellers that's puttin' in."

One after another, a number of well-known good shots were paying their dollars, and there would have been more offerings, perhaps, if some of the experts present had not been out of silver. When the required number was understood to have been made up, the crowd fell back behind a rope barrier, leaving the contestants by themselves, at the line.

They were all full-grown men, apparently, with one exception, and no objection to him had been made, so long as he was able to pay his dollar. It was also entirely regular that a big black man, probably belonging

to him, should walk forward to speak to him, as he stood in his place at one end of the line, ready to draw cuts with the rest for his turn to shoot.

"Massa Dan, I seen yo' pay in. Did yo' sell yer hoss? I done got my rewahd foh Jeckler, but the critter he was on belonged to a feller yer in Nashville. He done give me ten."

"Sam," whispered back Dan, "I got a hundred. I say, now, do you just keep your eye out for a Boston chap that says his name is Brown. He's a land buyer. 'Pears to me he'll bear watching."

"Massa Dan," said Sam, "I done seen that feller, a'ready. Don't like him, nuther. I'll jes' hunt him up. But dey all want to keep it still 'bout Bill Jeckler, jest now."

A hat full of clipped straws was at that moment held before Dan, and he carelessly took out one of them.

"Hullo, boy!" exclaimed the hat-holder. "That was the last o' the luck straws. The rest of 'em don't count. You've got the shortest. It'll be your first shot. Reckon you've lost your dollar."

"Massa Dan!" said Black Sam, excitedly, "jes' do you plum centre! Call it a squirrel head, up a tree."

"Git back, you black wolf!" commanded the hat-holder. "Git out! Who's nigger are you?"

"All right, massa," said Sam. "I's heah wid young Cap'n Martin. He's moah a gen'leman dan you is."

Sam stepped quickly away, while he was speaking, but his reply had not been given in a whisper, and a man on horseback, twenty yards away, rode a little nearer and leaned forward in the saddle. Other men, mounted or on foot, got out of his way respectfully, and he seemed to divide public interest with even the target. He was tall, thin, sallow, and when he raised the dingy old chapeau which completed his faded uniform he uncovered a dense crop of stiff gray hair. He wore no epaulettes, for one of General Jackson's shoulders had been too tender for such a weight ever since his fight, years ago, with Thomas H. Benton.

"Captain John Martin's son," he muttered,

fixing his piercing eyes upon the unconscious Dan. "I wish I could have five thousand men like his father with me at New Orleans. Instead of that, I must take whatever materials I can get."

The conditions of the match were loudly proclaimed, and Dan stepped forward to the line. As he did so, his sunburnt face grew almost pale, his mouth shut tightly, and his lithe frame seemed to be hardening. Up came his long rifle, steadily, slowly, and it seemed to have but just reached a level when he drew the trigger. There were markers near the target, and they sprang toward it as the rifle cracked.

"Plumb centre!" shouted one of them, and a storm of cheers drowned the further assertions, "nobody can beat that!"

The fourteen others were to have their chances, nevertheless, and Dan walked back to reload.

"Massa Dan!" he heard. "Come dis way, suah. Gin'ral Jackson wants to see ye."

"Oh!" exclaimed Dan, and a blaze of red which his success and the cheering had

brought into his face flitted out of it. In its place followed a scared and anxious look, as if something awful were about to happen to him. He was really a courageous young fellow, however, for he bravely followed Black Sam, and stood erect in front of the greatest man that he knew anything about.

"Dan Martin," said the general, with a genial, winning smile, "how is your father's wound getting on?"

"It's curing, sir, but he's too lame to come," stammered Dan. "He says I'm to take his place in your new army. I can shoot, — if you'll take me."

"Take you?" almost laughed the general. "You'll do! Hurrah for our boys! Fellow-citizens, we are going to beat the British army with the boys of Tennessee and Kentucky!"

It may be that the storm of ringing cheers which answered him were in part responsible for the half badness of the next two shots fired, but the fourth was another centre shot, as good as Dan's.

The marksmen who now followed were



"You'll do," said General Jackson

disposed to be exceedingly deliberate. There were also discussions and measurements at the target, and there were intervals between shots, so that General Jackson was able to ask further questions, not only about Captain Martin, but concerning a number of his neighbors. It was said of him that he knew every man in Tennessee and just what each man was good for. His last question was:—

“Dan, how many colored men like your Sam can you bring along? I want every one of ’em.”

“There ain’t many like him —” began Dan, but he was interrupted.

“Massa Gin’ral!” shouted Sam, himself, with his very widest and most ferocious grin, “mought I come ’long wid Massa Dan? Golly! Whoop! I kin shoot sojers!”

“Come?” echoed the general. “Well, if I’m to save New Orleans, I mustn’t turn away the best soldiers I can find. Sam, you stick to Dan, till I know what I’m going to do with him.”

“Massa Gin’ral, I’s boun’ to stick,” re-

sponded Sam, in fierce exultation, "but heah's jes' one moah. Wat ye gwine to do wid him? I know him. It's ole Ki-a-wok. He's Red Shirt Joe, up heah, an' he's a bohn debbil Seminole."

A pace behind the negro, indeed, stood a shape as remarkable as his own. From under a neatly made straw hat hung masses of straight black hair, on either side of a beardless, deeply wrinkled, copper-colored face. Beady, black, sunken eyes, a hawk nose, a retreating chin and forehead, made up a countenance more savage, more cruel in expression, more absolutely devilish, than even that of Black Sam. His attire, nevertheless, was somewhat in keeping with the jaunty appearance of his new straw hat. He wore a blazing red shirt, clean buckskin leggings with ample fringes, and elegant bead-embroidered moccasins. His wide, new leather belt sustained a tomahawk and sheath knife, and he carried a handsome silver-mounted rifle. On his bosom were several medals, but Black Sam remarked aloud:—

"Debbil Seminole wah chief make be-

lieb peace. No wah-paint. No 'calp-lock on he legs."

General Jackson sat motionless on his horse while the Indian stepped forward, but he then leaned to hold out a hand and say:—

"How! Ki-a-wok is a great chief. Bad man. What is he here for?"

"How! Ugh!" grunted the red man, as he took the proffered hand. "Ki-a-wok good man now. Jackson go kill heap Red Stick Creek for Seminole. Red Shirt Joe come go along on war-path. Kill heap red-coat. Kill!— Now! Ugh! Tell if Jackson's men kill ole Crooked Knife?"

"No," said the general, appearing to know something of the celebrated Creek warrior mentioned. "He got away. He and all his gang are with the British. Why did you go with Tecumseh?"

"Ki-a-wok want heap fight," stolidly responded the Seminole. "Want kill. Tecumseh dead. Joe go home. Hear 'bout Jackson. Hear he kill heap Red Stick Creek. Come see him. Go to New Orleans. Heap more

fight. What Jackson say Seminole chief? Ugh!"

"Come right along, you bloodthirsty old murderer," exclaimed the general. "You're a recruit worth having. I must take all that come, just now. Keep with Sam and Dan and come and see me at headquarters."

"Good!" said the Seminole, with a cruel smile flitting across his face. "Ugh! Ki-a-wok want 'calp!"

"That's all you do want," growled the general. "You're a human tiger. Hullo, Hutton, what is it? Who's that?"

A very young-looking man in the uniform of a captain on the general's own staff had approached on the other side of his commander's horse, and with him was a short, thin, black haired man, rigged in a handsome suit of fine twilled linen. He wore a Panama hat, a diamond pin, and there were rings on his fingers and in his ears. To an experienced observer, however, and he was now before one, not all his dandy outfit could save him from conveying an impression that he was a seaman. For instance,

his hands were tar-stained in perfect accordance with the swaggering sailor's roll in his gait. He seemed to be unarmed, and he bowed not only respectfully, but with perfect self-possession, when the general turned and glanced over him, from head to foot.

Captain Hutton had pressed forward near enough to be unheard by anybody else, when he said, under his breath : —

“ Pierre Chanon, he reports himself. Special messenger from Jean Lafitte. Something about Barataria.”

“ Oh ! The pirates,” growled back the general. “ I half expected to hear from them. Bring him to headquarters. What about that British spy ? ”

“ Found him,” said Captain Hutton. “ He's in Nashville now. What are we to do with him ? ”

“ Do ? Why, nothing at all,” replied the general. “ Let him learn all he wants to know and let him go away. I wish I could send Pakenham full accounts of the way things here are looking to British eyes just now. I'd furnish the spies myself and pay 'em too.”

Captain Hutton laughed, but could not say any more just then, for fear of being overheard; and he turned away, taking Pierre Chanon with him.

The next moment a loud voice from the shooting line was announcing the result of the first trial of skill. No less than four out of the fifteen shots had struck the centre, and all the others were pretty good ones. It was necessary, therefore, that the first quartette should try again, and a fresh mark was put in place upon the target.

"Shoot close now, Massa Dan," said Black Sam. "Don't yo' miss!"

General Jackson had listened to the report of the markers with evident interest, and he said to himself, in a voice that was husky, as if with suppressed wrath:—

"This is only sixty yards. Very short range. I must let the British come close up. Every ball sent to-day would have brought down a man. I must remember sixty yards at New Orleans."

Again cut straws were drawn, and this time Dan Martin was at the end of the list

instead of at the beginning. The general excitement was increasing every minute, and some of it may have got into the nerves of the first man to fire, for the markers at the target called out: —

“One inch to the left!”

The second man drew his bead with deliberate care, sighting again and again before he pulled the trigger.

“Inch to the right!” came back from the target. “Them two shots is tied.”

The third stepped forward and his bullet went instantly, whether or not there was anything the matter with him.

“Half inch below!” was announced, and a friend of the marksman sang out exultantly: —

“Bully! You’ve won the pistols.”

“Jest you wait,” he quietly responded. “I know those Martins. I sarved with the captain. Dan’s chance is good yet.”

Dan stepped forward, and, somehow, his entire body seemed to be aware that General Jackson was watching him.

He stood still, not raising his rifle, until a queer tingle in his fingers had passed

away. Then he was once more all hickory and whipcord. He must have had the eye of a telescope, too, for he said to himself:—

“I can see the other bullet spots. I’ll shoot at the one below the red —”

His rifle arose, then, with a swift, regular motion. It cracked, and in a few seconds more a tumultuous roar of cheering followed the markers’ announcement:—

“Plumb centre agin! He’s won it!”

The loudest yell sent up came from Black Sam, but a short, fierce whoop burst from the lips of Red Shirt Joe, or Ki-a-wok, whichever name he was to go by. He even came forward and gravely shook hands with Dan, remarking:—

“Young chief. Joe know he father. Boy kill heap, some day. Ugh!”

General Jackson must have had what might be called business reasons for watching that last shot so closely.

“I think I want that boy,” he remarked. “He’d be true as steel. He will do. His nigger, there, is just the right one to send with him. Captain Hutton, these, and the

Seminole. They must go to Barataria without anybody knowing that I sent them. That pirate's nest on Grand Terre Island may become the key to New Orleans, for all I know."

His preparations for his coming fight, therefore, were making in various ways. He was even studying already the field of his army operations, and he was eager to seize and hold any point of possible advantage.

Captain Hutton came to speak with Dan, and made arrangements for meeting him again that very evening. After that, he and Pierre Chanon departed. All the while, however, a strange sort of alliance had seemed to grow up between Black Sam and the Seminole. They did not wait for Dan or anybody else, now, but walked away together, not uttering a word until they were out of the crowd. Then, without turning his head or pausing in his walk, the red man asked of the black: —

"What Sam here for? Kill? Ugh! Run away?"

"No!" said Sam. "Didn't kill him. Hab a fight, dough. Gwine down to New Orleans wid Massa Dan an' Gin'ral Jackson. Fight

de British. W'at about ole Seminole debbil? W'ot'd Gin'ral Harrison say, s'pose he know yo' are heah?"

"Ugh!" said his companion. "Ki-a-wok no want Harrison. Tecumseh great chief. Kill for him. He dead now. No want Proctor. Heap gone away. Come see Jackson. Big chief he. Kill heap Red Stick Creek for Ki-a-wok."

To either his own mind or Sam's, that explanation was perfectly plain. So it would have been, no doubt, to either of those experienced Indian fighters, William Henry Harrison or Andrew Jackson. The Seminole had no prejudices, as between one white nation and another. At the same time, his whole idea of earthly happiness, success, glory, was in the taking of as many other human lives as he could, scalps, too, if he could get them, with only a limited inquiry into whatever reasons he might give himself for the killing done. All that his inherited morals called for was a declaration of a war-path, somewhere, and an opportunity for choosing his own side of the quarrel.

Black Sam was beginning to say something about Florida and former times which might have thrown some light upon his relations with the Seminole warrior, when a man on horseback drew rein near them, and inquired:—

“Hey, there, you nigger! Can you tell me where General Jackson is?”

“Reckon I kin, sah,” said Sam. “He’s out yondah, in de town, a min’in’ his own biz. How is yo’ likin’ dat ar’ Martin colt you’s on? Reckon he’s wuf all yo’ gin foh him.”

“Know him, do you?” exclaimed the stranger. “You shut up about that. What I want is the general.”

“Ugh!” sharply interrupted the Seminole. “How Major Upson?”

An astonished oath sprang from the lips of the asserted Mr. Brown and his face turned pale for a moment.

“You here?” he said, “you red serpent! — I’m not in the army any more. I’m down here buying land.”

“Ugh!” said the red man. “Good! Upson take land. Play spy. Lose hair. Ole

Jackson hang him on tree. Got good hoss? Go redcoat camp. Ride heap! Kill hoss! Jump!"

"I don't know but what you're right about that," dolefully responded the discovered spy. "It's pretty close quarters for me.—I say, you served under General Proctor and Tecumseh. You ought not to betray me."

"Ugh! No!" said the Indian. "Upson get away. Go now!"

Here, evidently, was a point of honor on the war-path concerning which he had no question. He might even be admiring the cunning and courage of the British brave who had ventured in so far among his enemies. Black Sam, however, was under no such obligations, and the rifle in his hand was quickly rising when Red Shirt Joe put a firm hand upon it.

"'Top!" he said. "No shoot. No take pris'ner. Upson ride away. Sam no sojer now. No on war-path. Ki-a-wok go tell ole Jackson, by an' by. Ugh!"

He motioned with his other hand to his British acquaintance, and Major Upson, if

that were indeed his true rank and name, galloped swiftly away.

“I’s gwine to see Gin’ral Jackson ’bout dis myse’f!” roared Sam, angrily. “Yo’ ort to ha’ let me take him.”

“No!” said the Seminole. “He no red coat on. No war-paint. Say buy land. Go home. Tecumseh dead. Proctor heap gone. No want Upson ’calp.”

This time Black Sam could not at all understand his red friend’s line of argument, but he did not know everything. The truth was that the Seminole’s quick ears had caught part of General Jackson’s reply to his aide-de-camp.

Indian cunning could heartily approve the laying of anything in the nature of a trap, over and above his other ideas concerning Upson’s undertaking. Of course, however, he readily consented to go with Black Sam in search of the general, to deliver the superfluous information that a British officer had been discovered, wandering around in Tennessee as a land speculator from the patriotic city of Boston.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL JACKSON'S MESSENGERS

IT is quite probable that the general public did not know as well as did Andrew Jackson that the British military commanders, north and south, were taking every means in their power for ascertaining the exact state of affairs among the settlers of the Mississippi Valley. Not to have done so would have been an impossible oversight on their part, for they were risking a great deal upon their New Orleans expedition. It was afterward reported to have cost the British treasury, in preparation alone, without counting final losses, over five millions of dollars.

As for Dan Martin, at the close of the target practice, he found himself drifted away to the farther side of the parade ground. Here he was surrounded by admiring riflemen, some of whom were old friends of his

father, and also by personal evidence that there were a great many boys in Nashville, every one of them brimming with warlike spirit and ready to carry a rifle against all the armies of Europe. Dan tried hard to keep from looking as proud as he felt, but his eyes betrayed him a little. It was really a great thing that he had done, for a boy of his age, and the pistols were really a better pair than he was likely to have obtained in any other way. With them came a pair of bullet-moulds and a pouch that was already half full of rounded lead.

"They're big bore," he said to himself. "Those balls'll weigh nigh to an ounce apiece. Don't I wish I could show 'em to father and mother, and to Jim and the girls? What I want next, though, is a good dinner, and then I'll go and watch 'round till I find what the general's going to do with me. I like Captain Hutton, anyhow. I can get along with him."

He had no idea whatever of how much he had really won, with his pistols and bullet-moulds. He may not have known what

nerves were, or how valuable, for dangerous service, is the not any too plentiful quality described as "nerve." That was what he had been displaying at the shooting line, and it was a grand addition to all his patriotism.

The headquarters of General Jackson were in a two-storied frame house, near the middle of the town. There were several rooms on the ground floor of this house, and in the largest of these he sat that evening, reading despatches and conversing with his officers and other friends, as they came and went.

In front of the house were picketed a number of horses, and a brace of sentries walked slowly up and down, ready to prevent intrusion or to announce any desirable arrivals. Such of these as could not at once be admitted to the general's presence were temporarily kept in waiting in the other rooms.

In one of these, just after supper time, sat Dan Martin, with Ki-a-wok and Black Sam, and neither of them wore a very patient expression on his face. Dan, for his part, seemed to be watching the door into the

general's room, rifle in hand, very much as if he were prepared to shoot at whoever might come through. Black Sam was not sitting at all, for he had preferred to sprawl at full length on the floor, grinning ferociously at the windows, the ceiling, at every article of furniture in its turn, while he fingered the haft of his long file-knife in a way that indicated a strong disposition to pull it out of the sheath.

The Seminole chief sat as if he had been turned into bronze, but there was an indescribable fierceness in his eyes, and his tomahawk lay in his lap. Beyond a doubt, he was either absorbed by or filled with the consciousness that he was just at the outset of a tremendous war-path, with a fine prospect for killing.

In the other room, at one side of the table at which General Jackson was examining papers and giving orders, sat his aide-de-camp, Captain Hutton, and Pierre Chanon, the ambassador from Jean Lafitte's stronghold of freebooters at Grand Terre Island, on Barataria Bay, below New Orleans.

A large, stern-looking officer at the general's right had been asking a number of questions of Chanon, and at the end of these General Jackson said to him:—

“General Coffee, my friend, that will do. We know now about all he has to tell us, and there is only one answer to be made. Captain Hutton, you and a party will go back with Chanon. You will boat it down the Cumberland to the Ohio, and then take a Mississippi flatboat down to New Orleans. You will get there long before I do, and you will be ready to report when I come, for your first errand will be to Barataria. Now, Chanon, I will not send anything in writing to Jean Lafitte. Captain Hutton will have something to show him. You, yourself, may say to him from me, and you may say it to all the rest of his crew, if he wishes you to do so,—just this. The British mean to clean out Grand Terre Island and get possession of that and of Barataria Bay. Whatever they may promise beforehand, they will capture the Lafittes and their men, if they can, and they will hang every one of them

at the yard arm as pirates, within twenty-four hours after taking them. If the British themselves do not break up that buccaneer's nest, the United States must and will. If nobody else does it, I shall do it myself. There is going to be an end of it, and Jean Lafitte is a fool if he can't see it. Now! Any property that the Lafittes can move away will be safer in New Orleans than it will be anywhere else."

"Some gone to sea," said Chanon. "No more sheep sail out now. No safe. Some property go up bayou. Some put away in swamp. Bon!"

"I suppose that may be so," said the general, quietly. "He may lose a good deal of that. New Orleans is better. The Lafittes have warehouses there. I can keep Governor Claiborne's hands, or any other man's hands, away from all of you, as soon as you belong to the forces under my command. You will all be entirely safe, after you have helped me beat off the British, and you will save your own necks."

The Frenchman's not uncomely face light-

ened with a shrewd smile as he listened, and he bowed respectfully.

“Very goot, Monsieur le General,” he responded. “I tell him. I go. But I say one t’ing more. Very mosh Barataria merchandise haf been put in New Orleans now. Ver’ goot leetle place. Dose British must take de ceety before dey hang Jean Lafitte and Pierre Chanon. I understand ver’ well, by gar!”

A curious man was this Chanon, and an expert might have detected defects in his broken French-English. He arose to go out, and Captain Hutton said to him:—

“Wait for me, Chanon. I’ll be with you in a few minutes.”

“Bring in Dan Martin and his friends,” said the general. “Coffee, I’ll show you three new specimens. We are getting all sorts of reënforcements.”

“We need ’em all,” laughed the veteran soldier who had fought more battles with Indians than had even General Jackson himself. “But what can you do with a lot of pirates?”

"Just what I said," replied the general. "We couldn't convict them of piracy, if we should try. We did try once, and they slipped through the law. They have commissions and letters of marque, as lawful privateers, from the Spanish republics of South America. That is what they claim to be,—and slave traders and smugglers. Barataria must be wiped out, but, first of all, the British mustn't have it."

"What could they do with it?" asked Coffee.

"Well," said the general, slowly, "I don't know those bayous as well as I wish I did, but the Lafittes land cargoes up the Mississippi. What if the British held Grand Terre and were piloted by the pirates to establish a thousand men, with cannon, on the river bank, above New Orleans? It would cost us something to dislodge them. There are other points too. I can use all the pirates."

"Good," said Coffee, "if you can bag 'em. Here comes Hutton."

The aide-de-camp came in without speaking, and once more Ki-a-wok came forward

and offered a hand to the general, as if he himself were another war chief of equal rank and importance.

“How!” he said. “What Jackson do now?”

“How!” replied the general, in a friendly manner. “War-path, chief. I’m sending you on a big scout. You get killed maybe.”

“Ugh! good!” grunted the Seminole, a look of satisfaction dawning in his face. “Joe kill too. Go right along.”

His English was better than that of most red men, for he was said to have passed years of his boyhood as a prisoner, half a slave, among the white settlers of northern Georgia. He now stepped aside, and the general turned to Dan.

“You have come to take your father’s place, have you?” he said, in the cordial, winning way which had so much to do with his great personal popularity. “You can’t quite do that, my boy. He’s one of the best men that ever carried a rifle. But I’m glad to have such boys as you are. Now, on his account and your own, I can’t

let you stay in Nashville. Bill Jeckler's body was found by his friends, at the spring where you and Sam camped. Sam brought in the horse Bill was known to have ridden. You were reported, too, just this side of your camp, next morning. The mountain outlaw gang takes revenge. You and Sam might get a shot from behind a bush,—or a stab in the dark. Are you ready to go on a long trip?"

"Reckon we is, Massa Gin'ral," broke in the black man, grinning horribly. "Jes' w'at we kem foh. Whar kin we git some hosses?"

"I sold mine," said Dan, quickly, "and the man that bought him didn't come from Boston. He's English, and he's a kind of spy—"

"Dan!" interrupted the general. "You and all of them must keep silence about that. Not one word to anybody. Every British spy that comes is only one more messenger from me to Pakenham. I wouldn't stop one of 'em for anything. But you won't need horses. You are going to New Orleans by the river, with Captain Hutton.

He will give you your orders. Red Shirt Joe, you and Black Sam are to go with Dan and the captain."

"Ugh!" said the Seminole. "No trail in water. All down ribber. No heap paddle. Ki-a-wok know New Orleans. Know Lafitte. Know Chanon. Know Barataria."

"I declare!" exclaimed General Coffee. "Where haven't you been! I believe you've hunted scalps farther than any other red-skin I ever heard of! From the everglades of Florida and from the Gulf of Mexico, away up into Canada with Tecumseh!"

"Ugh!" said the Seminole, as he and his friends went out. "Kill heap!"

Black Sam had not been so far, probably, but he had done very well as a traveller and campaigner, and he was known to be a good boat hand. Captain Hutton's party, therefore, was made up with only one raw volunteer in it. That one, however, was loaded down with a most tremendous weight of reverence when he bowed himself out of that room. Well he might be, for the man who had been talking to him so kindly was some-

thing more than the mere general of an army. Without him there was no army and would not be any. It was almost true to say of him that he was himself the Southwestern army of the terribly imperilled United States.

Other visitors were waiting their turn. Few of them were in any kind of uniform, but almost all of them were really military men. They were prominent citizens of Tennessee and Kentucky, who had come, for the greater part, to tell their commander how many men, or how few, they believed they could bring him.

“Men! men!” groaned General Jackson, half despairingly, after listening to several discouraging reports. “What we need is men! I will take every boy that can carry a rifle. I will issue a proclamation calling on all the free colored men to volunteer for the defence of their country.”

He did that very thing shortly afterward, and some of the best fighting at New Orleans was done by American soldiers of African parentage.

Dan Martin would have been deeply interested in other conversations which took place that evening, if he could have been near enough to listen. One of these was held in front of a rude log stable behind a cabin on the road by which he had come to Nashville. A man and a woman stood here in the moonlight, looking at a gray horse whose hind feet the man had been examining.

"Sally," he said, "it's gettin' easier for him to step on. I reckon he'll be all right in a week or so. Tell ye what, that there hoss is goin' to be as good as ever. Then I'll hev him shod. One o' these days, though, I must git him to Cap'n Martin's."

"That'll be honest," she remarked. "Of course you will, but jest along now we're goin' to need one more hoss and Cap'n Martin doesn't. That critter's got to do some work, to pay for his keep and shoein'."

"Reckon he must," said her husband. "Cap'n Martin wouldn't object to that. But I wish't I knowed what them fellers was after yesterday. They had too many

questions to ask, to suit me. I wish I hadn't let out that it was Dan Martin that left this critter here."

"Jest so," she said, "I took it that they weren't any friends o' his'n. 'Pears like I could see it. But they can't do him no harm, 'at I can see, while he's away in General Jackson's army."

"Sally," he responded, with energy, "that's so, but it's an awful pity I can't be with Jackson, this time."

"You can't," she said. "You was with him nigh a hull year. You was up north with Harrison, awhile. Now, you owe something to me an' the children."

"So I do," he said, "but I wish't we had some grown-up boys to go in my place."

That was the spirit of the people all over the Western country. It was growing in fervor daily, as the news went on from house to house and from hamlet to hamlet that the great British fleet and army were actually on their way to change American free citizens into subjects of the king of England.

Another of the interesting conversations took place near the southerly end of the main street of Nashville. A man here was unhitching a large bay horse, saddled and bridled and carrying a valise behind the saddle, when he was hailed by four other men, on foot. They carried rifles, but their greeting was entirely peaceable.

"Stranger," said one of them, "jest wait a bit, please. I'd like you to tell me who sold you that thar hoss and whereabouts it was you met him."

"I bought him fair and square," was replied steadily, as the unhitching was completed. "My name is Brown. I'm from Boston —"

"We know that," interrupted the questioner. "You're a land spekkilator. I hain't any land to sell and I don't want yer hoss. But just about whar was it?"

Mr. Brown told them quite willingly, all about the breaking down of his gray and how and of whom he had obtained his fresh mount. They were civil, but very particular in all their inquiries, and they stood around

him somewhat closely, in a way that told him he must not try to escape until they were ready to let him go. They were a resolute-looking lot of men, and it might not have been wise to trifle with their tempers.

"That's all, mister," said one of them, at last. "I don't believe you had anything to do with the killin' of Bill Jeckler. You kin go. But we'll be even, yit, with Black Sam and Dan Martin."

"I didn't see any nigger," said Mr. Brown, "but the boy said he was going to join Jackson's army. I wonder if the general thinks he can fight veteran British soldiers with mere boys."

"What, mister? You don't believe he can?" roared one of the men who had not before spoken. "Don't ye let off any fool talk 'bout the Tennessee boys. I say, fellers, Dan Martin's a crack shot. He won the prize at the shootin', to-day. If he's goin' into Jackson's army, and if the nigger's agoin' in, that puts another show onto it. I'm goin' right in, myself. Tell ye what! I'll forgive any feller that'll go down to New Orleans

with Jackson, to fight the British. What do ye say ? ”

“ Well, Jim,” drawled the first questioner, “ I reckon I’m with ye on that. Hosses’ll be safer, hereaway, for a while. But, stranger, did you mean to say anything agin’ Ginerel Jackson ? ”

“ No, I didn’t,” replied Mr. Brown, with perfect self-possession. “ What I mean is that two and two make four. Count it for yourselves, now. General Pakenham will have fifteen thousand prime troops, with the best kind of artillery. How many men and guns must General Jackson have to make the fight a fair match ? I say he ought to have four times as many as are likely to join him. Now, what do either of you say to that calculation ? ”

“ That’ll do, stranger,” said one of them. “ That’s on the square. I s’pose Ginerel Jackson thinks so himself. But I’ll tell ye one thing, Mr. Boston man, we’ll fight the British if they’re ten to one.”

“ Good night, men,” said Mr. Brown, as he sprang into the saddle. “ There’s plenty of

pluck in you. But I stick to it that what the general needs is more men and more cannon, and where he's to get them I don't know."

There was nothing unpatriotic or offensive in that saying, and he was permitted to ride away, leaving behind him four riflemen who illustrated very well a saying reported of the general:—

"Horse thieves, General Coffee? Why, I wish I had every outlaw this side of the mountains, or in 'em, or beyond 'em. They're all good shots, and we could spare 'em if they made up their minds to settle in New Orleans."

Away rode Mr. Brown, as unwilling as ever to be addressed as Major Upson, of the British army. He even seemed to be in haste, and now and then he cast glances behind him as if he had an idea of possible pursuers.

"That was a pretty narrow escape!" he exclaimed, at last, when he had put behind him about three miles of a road which led southerly, toward the settlements on the

Tennessee River. "Those horse thieves are American patriots, and they'd have put a bullet through me if they had found me out."

Below the Tennessee River, in that day, there were indeed roads, of one kind or another, which went on southward until they disappeared among the forests of what is now the state of Mississippi. These were shortly to be trodden, wearily enough, by large parts of the army which General Jackson was collecting. He was to exhibit the heroic side of his character by his courage, cheerfulness, endurance, and his support of the flagging spirits of his men, during that exhausting march.

For ordinary travellers, nevertheless, the more usual, because easier, method of reaching the shore of the Gulf was by means of the flatboats which were then the forerunners of the mighty steamboats of the next generation. Horses, cattle, merchandise, and men, even whole regiments of volunteers, might obtain transportation upon these rude and comfortless, but fairly safe, arks of the West.

Whatever might be the travelling plans of Major Upson, his present thoughts were busy with the results of his investigations thus far, and with the military resources of the American commander.

“He has no artillery to speak of,” he said aloud, “nor any sufficient ammunition, even if he could obtain the guns in time. No skilled artillerymen. General Harrison took away and used up a large part of the available men from all this region. Jackson’s Creek campaign used up half of what was left. Now, if Jackson can get together as many men as he did before, or as many as Harrison did, he will do much better than I think he can. The fact is, as to Harrison, if the war office in London had given General Proctor, in Ohio, as much as they are now giving Pakenham, he and Tecumseh could have crushed the Yankees at the Miami, and marched right on to Pittsburg. They could have established a new United States boundary line at the Alleghany Mountains. If Captain Barclay, on Lake Erie, could have had a fourth part of the naval

force that will soon be in the Gulf of Mexico, Perry would never have built any ships, nor could he have fought any battle. We should now have possession of all the great lakes, forever. What a mistake it was! All that is now left or required for General Pakenham to do is to push right along and get hold of New Orleans before Jackson and his raw, half-armed militia come down the river."

Such was the entirely reasonable calculation of a brave and experienced officer of the British army, who had been with General Proctor up to the final disaster to the British arms on the Thames River, in Canada. Beyond a doubt, he was entirely correct, if he had not left out of account two very important elements of the military situation. One of these was the forever unaccountable slowness of the subsequent movements of the British fleet and army. The other was the war spirit of the West and the heroic good generalship of Andrew Jackson.

The intelligent and daring British spy rode on southward. The patriotic squad of outlawed horse thieves went their own ways,

not half so full as heretofore of the revenge for the slaying of their comrade at Indian Spring. All the world outside of Tennessee knew nothing at all of the enormous importance of what was going on in the front room of one small house in the main street of Nashville.

CHAPTER VI

DOWN THE CUMBERLAND

GENERAL JACKSON and some of his officers sat up late that evening, for the discussion of important despatches which had arrived from Washington, from the President, the Secretary of War, and other important personages. At the end of the long conference the general arose, and stood silent for a moment, somewhat gloomily, before he said:—

“Gentlemen, after all, this is as much as we had any right to expect. All that our government can give us, just now, is this full authority to raise and equip troops, and then do the best we can with them. I am satisfied.”

“I can’t say I am,” rasped General Coffee, angrily. “They might send us more powder, if they can’t send anything else. Powder gets used up.”

“There is a kind of remedy for that,” replied the general, with a brightening face; “our men must be made to bear in mind that we are short of ammunition. Not one of them must throw away a shot. They must all do as good shooting as Dan Martin did, to-day, on the parade ground. Every bullet must be sent at a red-coated target, and they must plumb centre.”

“That would be the end of Pakenham’s army,” laughed another veteran officer. “We must get the idea into ’em.”

“It’s in most of ’em now,” responded the commander-in-chief. “I think you will see some good shooting at New Orleans.”

The council of war broke up, all the minor members of it departed, and then the general himself wrote several letters before he lay down upon a low camp bed, in that same room,—to lie awake and think, hour after hour, of the tremendous work that was before him.

Not long after sunrise next morning a group of about a dozen men stood on the river bank, a mile below Nashville.

“Captain Hutton,” said General Coffee, “here are your full instructions. You may read this paper to Jean Lafitte, but he will have to be satisfied without any agreement in writing. The general doesn’t more’n half trust him, anyhow.”

“All right, general,” replied the captain; “I’ll know what to say and do.”

“Of course you will,” said Coffee. “Push off now. He doesn’t want anybody to know right away that you’ve gone. Much less, where you’re going. It’s a pretty good boat. Glad of that.”

The men had been putting baggage of several kinds into a new-looking scow that lay moored at the bank. She was about fifteen feet long by five feet wide, so that, owing to her shallowness and flat bottom, it would require but little depth of water to float her. There were said to be shoals in the Cumberland, here and there, at this time of the year, and keelboats heavily laden might get stuck on them. There was no sign of any preparation for making use of a sail, and Captain Hutton himself had remarked:—

“Most of our work will be steering and poling. They say it’s mor’n two hundred miles to the Ohio, the way the Cumberland crooks, but nobody’s measured it yet.” He and his crew took their seats and the men on shore shoved off the scow, while General Coffee looked after them, remarking, somewhat quizzically:—

“What a gang! One prime good young regular army officer, one raw boy, right from a farm. Good fellow, too. One Seminole scalper, one out-and-out black Satan, and one bloody pirate from Barataria. Well, if anything should happen, all of them can fight. I reckon, on the whole, Jackson’s message’ll get to Jean Lafitte.”

“The current’s running well,” said an officer who walked away with him. “It’s good boating. But, between you and me, I’d about as lief hang Lafitte’s men as to make volunteers of them.”

“Nonsense!” exclaimed General Coffee. “I don’t believe they’re a bit worse than a Florida Seminole or a Tennessee outlaw. General Harrison employed the Maumees.

Proctor and Tecumseh pulled well together. The British on the Gulf'll be glad to use the Red Stick Creeks, all that are left of them, just as they used the Iroquois in the Revolution, and as they have the Shawnees and Sioux and Winnebagoes in this war. Nobody cares much, nowadays, who it is that kills off his enemies for him. Jackson doesn't care."

Black Sam was at the stern of the scow, steering her with a long, broad-bladed paddle. Ki-a-wok was in front, watching the water and ready to send back instructions to the steersman. Captain Hutton, Dan Martin, and Pierre Chanon were in the middle.

"Dan, my boy," said Hutton, "you told me that you knew a little French."

"Only just a beginning," said Dan.

"Well," said the captain, "you must learn more, as fast as you can. I must polish up my own, too, for it's out of use and pretty rusty. I don't intend to have any other language spoken on this boat all the way to the Ohio, — and afterward, too, so far as I can make it work. I'll put you to school — myself too."

“Just what I’d like,” said Dan. “Father said I’d need it in New Orleans.”

“You’ll need it where we’re going,” his friend told him. “Pick up every word you can.”

“How about Spanish?” asked Dan. “Some of the Louisiana people were Spaniards. I might meet ’em.”

“We can get along without it,” said the captain. “If we should need it, Black Sam and the Seminole are Florida Spaniards, — after a fashion. I don’t know ten words of it. Chanon is a sailor, though, and seamen gather in all sorts of lingos. — Oh! but won’t it be a tedious trip, floating down the Cumberland, the Ohio, and the Mississippi. They won’t run any faster, not even for General Jackson.”

Dan was silent, and Captain Hutton himself seemed inclined to be somewhat thoughtful, as the boat slipped along.

“Tedious? How could such a trip as this is be tedious?” was the question which came next into Dan’s mind as he turned and looked around him, up and down the river. He seemed to himself to have come out from his

quiet home, quiet in spite of its memories, into an outside world, full of wonders.

Captain Hutton, on the other hand, was an old campaigner, for a man of his age, and excursions of an adventurous character were nothing new to him. Dan thought of that.

"I've killed deer," he said to himself. "I killed a bear once, but the captain has seen some of Harrison's battles. Anyhow, I saw Black Sam kill Bill Jeckler, and I won the shooting match. I'm here, now, too,—and oh! but isn't General Jackson a great man? I mean to write to father about him the first chance I git. A letter from New Orleans would reach him."

He had learned that such was the fact, but that letters were often a long while on the way. His next interest was in his companions. He knew Black Sam well enough, already, and believed him to be a pretty hard case. The Seminole seemed to put him in mind of Tecumseh and the war on the Northern frontier.

"Nobody can guess," he thought, "how many scalps that red murderer has taken.

He has been killing men, women, and children all his life. All he wants now is a chance to kill some more, — he doesn't care what for. I hope he'll git killed himself, before long."

They had by this time swept on past the few farms and clearings along the bank, just below Nashville. There were but few tokens of improvement or cultivation now to be seen from the boat, for the farms inland were hidden by the bluffs and by long reaches of forest. The scenery, therefore, was as wild as it had been when the first white explorers paddled up or down the Cumberland. Every square mile of all that region, moreover, had been won from the red men by hard fighting. It was believed to be secure enough, at last, from the Indians. The British might never march in as far as this. There was no prophet to tell of the terrible days of civil war, when larger armies than were then dreamed of in America were to march and countermarch, and fight great battles, in the near neighborhood of Nashville.

The sun rose higher in the sky, and the

day was becoming a hot one. The main business of the boatmen was to keep the scow in the middle of the stream, so as to obtain the full strength of the swift current. Dan was almost beginning to understand what Captain Hutton meant by the word "tedious," when something startled him tremendously. It was not a war-whoop or anything else of an exciting character. It was only the very musical voice of the Baratarian, Chanon, as he lay stretched out by Black Sam, at the stern.

"Who would have thought that such a man could sing?" said Dan to himself. "But he can. I wish I understood enough of French to know what it is."

The voice of Chanon was a clear, full tenor, and had evidently been cultivated by much practice.

"Dan," growled Captain Hutton, "that kind of chap would sing just as well if he'd been scuttling a ship, after cutting every throat on board or making 'em all walk the plank. It's a pretty good pipe he has too."

What was meant by scuttling a ship? By

making the crew and passengers walk the plank? Dan was compelled to put together all that he had ever heard concerning the sea, and ships, and buccaneers, before he could form even a faint idea of what those words might have in them.

“Awful!” he thought. “Why, that dandy Frenchman is as bad a murderer as Red Shirt Joe. I don’t know but what he’s worse, for he’s a white man. He must have seen horrible things in his day.”

Perhaps he had, — who knew? — yet there he lay now, not at all a bad-looking fellow, singing an old French love song with evident delight, for all the world as if he had never done anything else more piratical or had never had a cutlass in his hand.

The sea? The salt, wide ocean? That was far away, and it was not easy for a backwoods boy to form any satisfactory idea of it.

“I shall see the Gulf of Mexico, anyhow,” he thought, “and I mean to get a sail on it, if I can, — in a ship.”

It made him thrill all over, and he knew now that he would be as impatient as Cap-

tain Hutton himself over the slow and winding progress of boats down the rivers.

The pirate, if he was one, finished his song, and lighted a long yellow cigar to while away the time. Hardly, however, had the first puff of blue smoke floated away when the mouth of Black Sam opened in an outburst of his own very peculiar laughter. As the laugh ended, he in his turn began to sing, and part of his song was more difficult to understand than that of Pierre Chanon had been. It was, in fact, composed much more of sound than of articulate words, as were many of the strange weird melodies common among the black people. It was said that some of them, a kind of chants, had come all the way from savage Africa, and had been refitted in America, with only here and there a few scattered words of plantation English.

The Indian listened intently, but the music seemed to have a bad effect upon him. His face grew dark and sullen, and his hand played with his tomahawk.

"Ugh!" he grunted. "No good sing on

war-path. Take 'calp? Sing 'calp song. Joe kill ole Crooked Knife? Sing heap loud!"

More than once he had uttered what was supposed to be the whole of his Seminole war name, from which "Ki-a-wok" had been pruned down, but Dan had in vain attempted to remember or repeat it.

"It's as long as your arm," he had remarked of it. "Black Sam can speak it, but I don't believe I ever could. He says it means 'The man whose hands and face are bloody,' and if Red Shirt Joe hasn't earned it nobody else ever did."

Noon came, but there was no landing made, for the noonday meal was eaten of cooked rations in the boat.

"We mustn't lose an hour of time," said Captain Hutton. "The trip'll be long enough, and every mile counts."

"Can we keep on all night?" asked Dan.

"Of course we can," said Hutton, "unless it is too dark or too stormy. We can sleep and wake by turns. The river runs all night."

"We might catch fish as we go," said Dan. "There are plenty in the river."

"That's what we'll do," replied the captain, "but not till later in the day. We can do it then, any time, and cook 'em on shore."

More than once, already, Dan had been called to account for making remarks in English. Each time, if overheard, he had been compelled to try the same thing over in French. It was something of a bore to him, but it seemed to amuse and occupy his young commander. Pierre Chanon also had taken a smiling share in the schooling, and Dan was likely to have a considerable amount of his new language worried into him.

"If this trip's long enough," he said to himself, "they'll make a Frenchman of me before we get to New Orleans."

Who would have thought, however, that there was any fun in Red Shirt Joe?

He listened gravely, watching the young student and his professors, and at last, with a grim smile on his face, he began to talk to Dan in unmistakable Seminole, that is,

nobody in that boat, except Black Sam, could have denied that it was the tongue commonly spoken among the Florida everglades. It may be, indeed, that he afterward poured out upon Dan more than one Indian dialect, and now and then he certainly did throw in a few words of Spanish.

“Boy no 'peak?” he said, at last. “Boy talk French? Talk Seminole? No want talk Red Stick Creek. By and by, all Creek get kill, ugh!”

In that hoped-for event, the tongue of that lost and scalped nation would be of no more use to the world. Dan, however, was quite willing not to acquire it, if there were hereafter to be Creeks by the million. He did not feel so about French, at all, and a feverish flush went all over him when Pierre Chanon said to him:—

“One of these days, you will go to la belle France. You will see Paris, the most beautiful city in the world. You will see all Europe. French is the language of all nations. It will carry you anywhere.”

Pirate, or privateer, or smuggler, he was

very nearly correct, for his native tongue was then, and for a long time afterward continued to be, the language of diplomacy and of much commercial correspondence among the great nations. Now, a change has come, or is coming, and the speech which Dan had learned at his mother's knee has actually supplanted more original languages and is more widely spoken than any other.

The sun was going down before any hooks and lines were thrown out. Fish enough were soon taken, and then a landing was made and a fire kindled.

"Only for cooking," said Captain Hutton. "We won't camp here. It's going to be the best kind of night for travelling. — Hullo! What's become of that Indian?"

Nobody could tell him. That is, the only sure thing was that the Seminole had seemed to disappear the instant the boat touched the shore. There was no good reason for imagining that he had run away, but his white and black comrades had broiled and eaten their suppers, and still the red warrior did not come for his own. Once, indeed, Pierre

Chanon declared that he heard the distant sound of a gun, but no second report followed to confirm him.

"I hope he didn't go for scalps," said Captain Hutton. "There are no Creeks or British among these woods. I hope, though, that he won't make us waste any time waiting here for him."

He did not. They had only just begun to wait and to be impatient when their Seminole friend strode out into the light of the camp fire and threw down near it the carcass of a fine fat buck.

"Ugh!" he exclaimed. "No eat fish all time. Eat heap meat. Good?"

"Good luck!" exclaimed Captain Hutton. "I'm glad you happened to strike one. The woods must be full of 'em."

The deer were plentiful, truly, but it was probably well that the best hunter of the party had gone out to find one. "Ugh!" growled he, as he broiled a cut of venison at the end of a stick. "By an' by, w'ite men kill all deer. Cut all tree. Make all farm. Heap fool."

One important cause of Indian hostility to white settlers, from the beginning, had been the general perception, by the red men, that the game in all their forests was diminishing. They themselves had disappeared before the fish also were destroyed from the rivers and ponds by wasteful white men.

The halt was ended as soon as Joe arose from his deer-meat. Then, as the moon arose and the night breeze swept away the summer heat, the boat was pushed off, and General Jackson's messengers went on down the Cumberland with the swift current.

As for the general himself, he was having a warm time of it that evening. More despatches and letters had arrived, not only from the government at Washington, but from various parts of the country, East and West. He and his officers read and conferred hour after hour, and more than a little gloom seemed to be gathering around the long table in the army headquarters at Nashville.

"Gentlemen," said the general, after several of his friends had commented upon the

despatches, "we can see how it is. All the war interest of the nation is transferring itself from the Northern frontier to the Southern. General Harrison whipped the British and Indians in front of him. The great lakes are clear of the British flag. We have beaten our Southern savages pretty thoroughly too."

"We get some thanks for it," interjected General Coffee, "but that's all."

"About all," said Jackson, "and what I was going to add, is this. The Red Stick Creeks are out of our way, except a few hundreds that will join the British. I'm glad of that. And now we, with perhaps as many men as Harrison had with him in Ohio, are expected to face and fight five times our number of British veterans,—regular troops. That is the national calculation."

There was a bitterly sarcastic expression in his face and voice, and one after another the brave men around him admitted the unpromising character of the situation. There may have been sinking hearts among them, and there certainly were anxious faces, but

a gleam of light was growing in the eyes of the leader to whom they all were turning. He arose and stood erect at the end of the table.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we know our exact position. We are expected to perform impossibilities. That was what they asked of Perry, on Lake Erie. They demanded of him that he should build a new fleet and win a hopeless victory. He went ahead and did it! So will we! We will make a new army, and with it we will beat the British out of America. We will take in every man and boy, white, red or black, that can level a rifle or pull a trigger!"

Something like a shock of electricity went around the hitherto gloomy circle. Faces brightened. Eyes flashed. Strong hands went to sword hilts. Every man sprang to his feet, and several voices together exclaimed:—

"General Jackson, we're with you! Hurrah for New Orleans!"

The time to cheer had hardly yet come, however. Heroism, energy, patriotism, might

work wonders, here and there, but after all, whether they know it or not, the great questions which remained to be settled was simply this, "Will General Pakenham get there first,—or will Andrew Jackson?"

CHAPTER VII

NO GARRISON YET

“**U**GH! New Orleans!” said Ki-a-wok.
“Heap bad town. Joe no like ’em.”

“Here we are,” said Dan Martin, “but you can’t see much of the town from the deck of this old boat.”

She was a flatboat of the largest size, and she was about to be moored to the levee on the left bank of the river, near the middle of all that then existed of the Crescent City. On her deck, well forward, stood a party of five who as yet had nothing better to do than to watch the colored “roustabouts” who were pulling on the hawsers and to wait for the running out of a gang-plank. They had had a long, long river voyage, and one of them felt that he was a great deal older than when he came away from home.

Not only had Dan talked a great deal of French, acquiring the use of it with credit-

able rapidity, but he had heard and learned a great deal in other directions. Captain Hutton had taught him the manual of arms, and had told him many things about camps and forts and various war matters. The captain had one strong point, however. It was stronger than any other in those days. He believed utterly in his commander-in-chief, and he had made Dan as enthusiastic as himself concerning Andrew Jackson and what that marvellous man was able to do. Dan had reached New Orleans, therefore, with a clear idea that it would be no town at all until the arrival of the general. All the crew of the flatboat and all of her passengers had seemed to be of the same opinion.

"Dan," said Captain Hutton, cheerily, "are you glad to get here? I am."

"I reckon I am," said Dan. "It's been a long boat ride."

"Well," said the captain, "all of Jackson's army that comes on foot'll have a harder time than we've had. I hope he'll be able to bring some of 'em on boats."

"If he does, they'll be a long time getting

here," said Dan. "But if it hadn't been for the boat hands I'd ha' forgotten my English."

"Humph!" said the captain. "English? — Why, you're going right into a French school. This place hasn't been American a dozen years yet. It takes longer'n that to change people a great deal. Anyhow, no Frenchman likes the British, and there'll be a pretty strong loyalty of that kind to the Stars and Stripes. You'll come along with me. I must deliver my papers to Colonel Ross and Governor Claiborne, if they're in town."

"Captain," said Pierre Chanon, in French, "am I to meet you at Madame Bourier's? It won't do for me to be seen in town until I know what's been done while I've been away. Jean Lafitte himself may be locked up."

"Or dead," said the captain. "We are all at sea till we hear the news."

"I's gwine wid Chanon," said Black Sam. "Joe'll go 'long too."

"Ugh!" disputed the Seminole. "Chief 'tay on boat. No like heap town."

Dan was aware of a queer perception that

he understood the red man's dislike to that overlarge collection of houses and people. Nashville had been a kind of wonder to a backwoods boy, but he had been there before, and this time he had seen only such men and women and buildings as he was accustomed to. Here, however, was something much more extensive and altogether different. He felt that he was going ashore into a new un-American country, and a sense of his greenness, that is, of his utter ignorance, was taking hold of him. He had plenty of courage, however, and he boldly walked away with Captain Hutton, — keeping close to him.

Only a small part of New Orleans was as yet built up at all compactly, — the business district along the water front. The rest of it was scattered over a wide area, the wealthier citizens priding themselves upon the extent of their grounds and gardens. There were not many buildings with claims to architectural beauty, and by far the greater part were one and two storied wooden affairs, which would have been all the better for fresh

paint. The "embargo," before the war, and the war itself had borne hard upon the prosperity of New Orleans. There were considerable numbers of sea-going vessels now tied up along the river banks, on either side, rotting in idleness under the hot sun, and idly waiting for the peace which seemed to be as far away as ever.

Some of the warehouses, here and there, were really extensive, and in these, also, were waiting thousands of hogsheads of sugar, numberless bales of tobacco, and a yet more valuable deposit of baled cotton. These, with all the other accumulated wealth of the seaport, were looked upon by their owners, just now, as the very probable booty of the coming British invaders.

Some of it, nobody could guess how much, was said to be the property of the Lafitte brothers; and concerning these Dan Martin had learned much on his way down the river. He knew that they owned, or had seized, the island of Grand Terre, between Barataria Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, about forty miles south of New Orleans.

He knew that they had fortified the island so strongly that they had beaten off a British man-of-war. Whatever else he had learned was somewhat confused in his mind, but Captain Hutton had told him that his next errand for General Jackson was likely to take him right into the far-famed nest of the Barataria buccaneers. With reference to that and some other matters, his hand went to his pockets as he now walked along with the captain. He still had eighty dollars, and it would not do to let any kind of pirates take it away from him. Nevertheless, it gave him greater confidence to feel that he was rich and a soldier, instead of landing in a strange city, as some boys had done, without either friends or money.

“I belong to General Jackson’s army,” he thought, “and I’m under his orders, and those of Captain Hutton.”

At that point he began to forget everything else in the excitement of seeing so much that was new. Captain Hutton walked on like a man with business on his hands, and Dan kept up with him, mechanically,

only two or three times running against other wayfarers, while his eyes were wandering around too busily to warn him as to what or who was coming next.

Black Sam and Chanon, on getting ashore, had walked away along the river bank. They seemed to be in haste, and they did not meet any acquaintances, but in about five minutes they halted near a large wooden building. It seemed to be a warehouse or commercial establishment, of some sort, but it was shut up, and there was a chain and padlock on the door of the main entrance. In front of this stood a man in uniform who was apparently acting as a guard. A few paces beyond him lounged a long, sallow-faced fellow in a blue shirt, ragged trousers, and a pair of sailor-made canvas shoes.

Pierre Chanon uttered a low exclamation and jerked Sam's arm sharply.

"Everything has been seized," he said. "There's one of our men. Walk on."

"Reckon dey won't grab me," muttered Sam, as he obeyed, and they passed the warehouse, followed at once by the lounge.

"What is it, Antoine?" asked Chanon, as soon as they three were by themselves.

"The same old story," said Antoine. "Dominique Lafitte is in jail. Five hundred dollars reward is offered for Jean. We must all keep still until the storm blows over. We have been through such things before this."

"It is going to be worse for us this time," said Chanon, gloomily. "I must see Jean immediately. Where is there a canoe to be had? I want a large one, to take half a dozen or more."

"All right," said Antoine. "I will have a boat to-morrow evening, at the lower landing. We can get out through Bayou Quereau. They are watching the other passes. It won't do for you to be seen in the city right away."

"What then?" asked Chanon.

"You and the nigger take that dugout yonder and paddle across to the other shore. Go to Henrique's place. Everything'll be ready for you at the right time."

"Good!" said Chanon. "You must go to

headquarters and find Captain Hutton, just come down from General Jackson. Or see a boy that's with him, named Dan Martin. Let them know what to do and where to meet us and our boat. That's all, Antoine, but there's a bad storm coming."

"There always was one," laughed Antoine, "and it always blew over."

He had good reasons for his cheerful confidence. Again and again, year after year, the Louisiana state authorities and those of the nation had threatened vigorous measures for the suppression of the lawless community at Baratavia. Just as often, all their asserted plans had failed, or been abandoned, and the Lafitte brothers had returned to their regular business of using New Orleans as if that port and city had been little more than a very convenient branch of their establishment on Grand Terre Island.

Right under the noses of professedly angry and threatening officials, scores of cargoes of smuggled or pirated merchandise had been distributed up the river, or sold at auction to eager bidders upon Grand Terre. Much

was known to reach warehouses in the city. Planters and merchants dealt almost openly with the Lafittes, and carried home all purchases without molestation. Among the branches of trade and commerce to which especial attention was given by the Baratarians was the slave trade, whether they brought their black chattels all the way from Africa, or whether they operated as a piratical thorn in the sides of other slave traders. Every now and then they were able to offer the planters reënforcements of field hands and other laborers, male and female, hundreds at a time. One notable lot, sold at auction in the usual market-place at Grand Terre, was reported credibly to have numbered four hundred and fifty souls.

Pierre Chanon and Black Sam entered the dugout and paddled away, but they did not at once cross the river. They went up stream to the flatboat which had brought them to New Orleans.

“There’s the Seminole, away aft,” said Chanon. “I wish I could make him see us without sending any hail on board.”

Red Shirt Joe, or Ki-a-wok, was sitting at the stern of the flatboat with his head drooped as if he were asleep."

"No 'peak," said Black Sam. "Go ahead; Joe kin see a chipmunk inside of a hick'ry log. He allers keep he eye open; s'pose he gone dead."

He had had experience, probably, of the wonderful faculty of an Indian on a war-path, for not letting anything escape his tireless watchfulness. The flatboat seemed to be deserted by its crew, except that one black roustabout was lying on the levee as a watchman, and was lazily brushing away the flies that annoyed him. The canoe touched the side, and Sam put a hand on the shoulder of Chanon.

"Keep 'till," he said; "wait a bit. Joe lift he hand. Come right away."

"I'd better hail him," said Chanon. "I won't go on board; but we're in a hurry —"

Hardly were the words out of his mouth, however, before an ugly copper-colored face peered over the side of the flatboat with a low, inquiring, "Ugh?"

Black Sam replied only by a beckoning motion of his hand.

“Ugh!” said the Seminole. “Good. No ‘tay on boat. — Sam take gun.”

He handed down Sam’s rifle, which had been left in his keeping; then his own, and a small buckskin sack, which contained his other war-path baggage. A rope lay hitched to a ring on the deck, and no sailor could have beaten the swift and stealthy gliding down of Joe into the dugout by help of that rope. He took up a paddle and began to ply it. Off went the unsteady little craft like a racer, and this part of General Jackson’s scouting expedition was beyond probable interruption by any of the local authorities.

Dan Martin was already somewhat vaguely aware that Captain Hutton, as they walked along, had held two or three brief conversations with men whom he met. As for anything they had said or not said, Dan could not have reported satisfactorily, for his young head had been more than busy with other things. It might have been described as running over with this remarkable city and

its twenty thousand inhabitants. The captain now came to a halt and said:—

“Dan, my boy, here we are at the headquarters of Governor Claiborne. Sit down in the piazza, outside, while I go in. If anybody questions you, say you’re here under my orders.—But the news is tremendous. There is a British squadron already at Pensacola, with some troops, nobody knows how many. They are enlisting and arming the Creeks. They have issued proclamations to the people of Louisiana, Tennessee, and Kentucky. That’ll just please General Jackson. It’ll help him raise volunteers. We must get along quickly with our errand though, for Commodore Patterson is getting ready an expedition against Barataria. He can take it, too, for the buccaneer batteries at Grand Terre are all on the seaward side of the island. They are no protection against a naval force coming down through the bayous and across the bay. I don’t believe Jean Lafitte will offer any resistance.”

Dan became himself again as he listened.

All of his gawky uncertainty as a green country boy disappeared, and so did a half-dazed bewildered expression which had been upon his face. He had once more been made to feel that he was one of General Jackson's men, a soldier on important duty, and he became as alert and self-possessed as if he were looking out for game or for Indians among his own woods.

"Captain!" he exclaimed, "I reckon I ought to have spoken about it sooner. I saw that man Brown."

"What man was he?" asked the captain.

"Why," said Dan, "he's the British spy I sold my horse to. He was in a different rig, this time, but I'm dead sure I caught a glimpse of him."

"All right," said Hutton. "Don't say a word about him to anybody. General Jackson wants Pakenham to know just how our affairs looked, to an Englishman, when that fellow went through. He won't be able to tell how they look to the general himself."

"I'll obey orders," said Dan, "but oughtn't any spy to be shot?"

"You trust General Jackson and mind your own business," laughed Hutton, for he believed that he understood the purposes of his far-sighted commander.

Perhaps he could imagine General Jackson explaining the spy business with: —

"We must let the British believe that I have no army and can't get one together before next year. No news must reach them that will make them hurry forward. As for their advance squadron, whatever it is, every day it wastes at Pensacola is a day saved for our work at Mobile and New Orleans."

Whether or not that was the general's line of argument, one man had been greatly startled that morning. He had been pausing to purchase cigars of a dealer on what was then the main thoroughfare of the city, and the weed he was about to light had suddenly fallen from his hand.

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed, in an astonished whisper. "That's my horse boy! How on earth did he get here? He would know me in a moment. They'd hang me, sure, if they caught me. I must get on board

the *Polly* at once, whether she's ready to sail or not."

Then the brave fellow became instantly cool and self-possessed, and he did not walk away like a man who knew that he went along that street with a hangman's noose swinging over his head. He had even picked up the fallen cigar, and he lighted it calmly, with Dan Martin and Captain Hutton within twenty paces of him.

Coming southward on horseback, with a well-mounted party of American patriots for company, he had travelled by a shorter route and more rapidly than had the flatboat which had carried Dan and his friends around the many windings of the Mississippi River. He had now been in New Orleans, therefore, quite long enough to make his desired observations pretty thoroughly. He had been even preparing to get away before this unexpected warning of danger had come to him.

"I couldn't do much more here, anyhow," he was thinking. "I must say that there are more cannon here and more fortifications and more men than I expected to find, but there

isn't anything yet to hinder a strong British column from marching right in and occupying the city. It could be done without any loss to speak of, if they come any time this year. I can report that General Jackson won't be here for six months, at the least, if he waits for an army to bring with him."

He had measured the situation closely, intelligently, correctly, as it appeared to an English army officer, and as it would have continued to be, but for one half-invalid who was even now making his painful and difficult way from Nashville to the Gulf coast.

Major Upson soon began to walk more rapidly, and before long he reached the river bank near the spot where a small, unarmed schooner lay at anchor, a few yards out. A strip of blue bunting was fluttering from one of her booms, and a sailor sat near it watching the shore. The moment that this man caught a sight of Major Upson, he put a boatswain's whistle to his lips and blew it twice. Then a small boat, rowed by two sailors, came leisurely around from the opposite side of the schooner and toward the shore.

“Hullo!” said the major. “It looks as if something may be going wrong already.”

The boat was pulled straight for him, and as it touched the bank a man in it leaned forward to say:—

“Get in, Major. We have obtained our papers. We can pass Fort Philip. We’re bound for Venezuela, you know. Our cargo’s all aboard. We are to take our chances for escaping British cruisers, of course.”

“Hurrah!” went back, with half-suppressed energy. “It may be just in time to save my neck. I believe I’m discovered by some Tennessee men. Are we to start at once?”

“Up canvas and out,” was responded, with an earnestness equal to his own. “I was afraid we’d be detected before this time. It’s our last day, I’m thinking.”

“There isn’t much doubt of that,” said the major, “but we’ve learned all there is to learn. Our errand’s done, and we needn’t linger and throw away all we’ve risked our lives for.”

In a minute or so more, they were on board, but even then the schooner did not

exhibit any signs of haste,—nothing to attract attention. The anchor arose from its bed of mud as if it were still asleep, and the sails went up slowly. Only a few sailors were visible. The most acute observer might have discovered no reason for supposing the *Polly* to be more than she professed to be. Nevertheless, every man on board of her was an enlisted British sailor, full of loyalty to his flag and to his king, and her commander was the sailing-master of a British man-of-war.

The schooner moved away, and, as she swept slowly down the stream, a tall man, who stood near the mainmast, gazing back at the city, drew a long breath of relief.

“Thank God!” he exclaimed. “I’m out of it. I shall feel better when I see the red cross flag at the peak of a British seventy-four. But, after all I’ve seen and heard, I’d give something to know what that man Jackson is really going to do. I saw him. There is danger in that man. So there is in those sharp-shooting riflemen of his.”

No one but himself knew what that man

Jackson was doing, nor anywhere nearly how much. Neither did they understand that the greatest of all his anxieties related to the time which was likely to be consumed by the British military and naval authorities in sending forward their great expedition.

Dan Martin had by this time seen Captain Hutton again, and had received instructions concerning his own quarters and rations. He had been permitted to stroll around the city for an hour or so, as he said, that he might feel a little less like a cat in a strange garret. After that, he was once more in waiting at Governor Claiborne's headquarters as the "orderly" of Captain Hutton.

The captain was to dine there with the governor. Among the guests were to be Commodore Patterson, in command of the naval forces of the United States in the Gulf of Mexico; Colonel Ross, in command of the detachment from the regular army, stationed at New Orleans; with a few other gentlemen of note, who were eager to discuss, conversationally, all the news they had from the North or from the British invasion.

Of course, they had later advices from all places than had been brought by Hutton, but whatever they knew of General Jackson's doings required explanation and addition from an officer of his own staff. It was after the dinner was cleared away, — not at a very early hour, — that Commodore Patterson may have made a mistake.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “the governor and I agree with General Jackson about this Barataria business. We must make a clean sweep of the buccaneers as soon as we can. Anyhow, Captain Hutton, you may go and do your errand. I'll not interfere with you. See me as soon as you return. Let me have all the particulars. The governor and I will hold off our hands until you return.”

That remark may or may not have been heard by the wrong ears, but Jean Lafitte's law adviser and defender, Edward Livingston, was at the table.

“That is all I ask,” responded Captain Hutton. “The general will be entirely satisfied. He means to attend to them, if you

do not, but he does not wish the British generals to make use of them. Grand Terre Island would be a strong position, too, for a British force to hold."

"After hanging its present garrison?" laughed the brave sailor. "Well, I think it wouldn't be worth much. The general overestimates it. But he does not at all overvalue the fighting qualities of the buccaneers. Lafitte could give us a couple of hundred trained artillerymen. We shall need every good gunner we can lay our hands on, — sea-wolf, land-wolf, Turk, or Egyptian."

The dinner ended, the guests departed, and Captain Hutton walked quietly away, attended only by Dan Martin.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BAYOU QUEREAU

THE hot, damp air hung heavily down over the vast expanse of the Mississippi River delta. It is a region which the river itself has manufactured with wonderful industry, century after century. It has done so by means of a main channel, not always running on the same line, from which, on either side, smaller streams go out like the fingers of a hand,—or of several hands. These lateral branches are called bayous, and a map of them made eighty years ago would not fit very well now. The diggings and borings which have been made seem to indicate that the salt sea was once at least six hundred feet deep at New Orleans. Much of the land in that vicinity will even now shake a little if a heavy man treads on it. Salt water may be reached, almost anywhere, at a few feet below the surface.

Of course, many of the ancient bayous disappeared, as the country was built up by floods of muddy water from the north, but others remained, permanently, and were used by the settlers as canals.

One of the most important employments of some of these bayous, in the year 1814, was that of giving the pirate merchants of Barataria Bay the means of conveying their merchandise to New Orleans and the interior without passing under the guns of Fort Philip, on the lower river, where also custom house officials might be watching for smugglers.

The bay itself is a broad sheet of land-locked water, an admirable harbor, cut off from the gulf by several islands. The largest of these, Grand Terre, is about six miles long and not over three miles wide at its greatest width. The mainland, above the bay, is of varied character, and many of its available areas for plantations were even at that early day improved and occupied. Some of the occupants were said to have acquired much of their apparent wealth by

means of their relations with the peculiar commerce carried on from the offices and warehouses on Grand Terre Island.

The bayous which opened into Barataria Bay wound away inland to a number of other settlements and plantations, to all of which merchandise might be conveyed as easily as to New Orleans itself. It was well known that fleets of barge ran to and fro, hither and thither, as occasion required. It was also said that the old-time authorities stipulated with the Lafitte brothers only that all goods, human or other, for the city, should be taken up or across the river after night-fall, when neither they nor anybody else could know how it was done. After getting into safe stowage in the city, one lot of goods might be marketed as well as another, — and no questions asked.

Some distance below the city limits and away over in the Bayou Quereau, at a late hour that evening, lay a well-made boat, resembling in shape and size the cutter of a man-of-war. It carried six oars and as many black rowers were holding them, ready for

orders. At the prow sat Black Sam, Pierre Chanon, and Red Shirt Joe. At the stern were Dan Martin, Captain Hutton, and a man whom Pierre Chanon had addressed as Captain Rousseau, but to whom not one of the black oarsmen had spoken a word. They sat in their places like so many wooden men, but then a slave was a slave in those days. Over him continually hung a whip and not far away from him was a levelled gun-barrel.

Dan's outfit had undergone a change, for Captain Hutton had made him put on a neatly fitting jacket suit of blue flannel, a straw hat, and a pair of shoes. He had not, however, parted with his rifle or his belt-pistols, and the captain still wore his sword. Ki-a-wok was as much a savage dandy as ever, his distinguishing garment being fresh and very red, reënforced by a blazing red silk neckerchief. The greatest change of all was in Black Sam, for he now appeared in a full suit of white cotton duck, yellow shoes, and a straw hat, besides having been in the hands of a New Orleans barber who

considered a close crop the correct thing for wool. His necktie was brilliantly blue, and his shark teeth were showing, every now and then, as if he were getting ready to use them on somebody.

"Ready?" asked Captain Hutton.

A low bow was the only response, and a lifted hand for which the oarsmen had been waiting. The oars went out in perfect unison, and the cutter glided swiftly away over the placid water of Bayou Quereau.

"Captain Rousseau," said Hutton, "may I ask how long is the trip to Grand Terre?"

"We are to be there before to-morrow noon," responded Rousseau, politely. "I must obtain a relay of rowers on the way. We are to get an early breakfast at the plantation of my friend, Monsieur La Blanche. Did you have a pleasant voyage down the river?"

"Slow," said Captain Hutton. "Tedious. General Jackson's volunteers will have a harder time, though, making so long a march by land. What is your opinion about his holding New Orleans?"

“My dear Monsieur Hutton,” said the courteous Frenchman, “you are a military man. I am not. I might say, however, if you are not familiar with the approaches to our city, I have studied them. I am satisfied that the British army cannot attack by any avenue which will not compel them to face superior numbers, if our magnificent general is the man I fully believe him to be.”

“They will attack with over ten thousand men, we are told,” said Captain Hutton.

“Monsieur!” replied Rousseau, with energy, his dark, intelligent eyes flashing fire. “No! There is no place where they can bring half that number to the front at once. Not a third of it. Our general, therefore, will repulse them with superior numbers. I have confidence in the hero of so many battles.”

“So has everybody else,” said Hutton. “But the British have the advantage in artillery.”

“That remains to be seen,” said Rousseau, with a meaning smile, and the talk went on concerning various features of the situation.

"I know what the captain's up to," thought Dan. "He's pumping him. I'm glad I know French enough to understand them. He's a good-looking pirate."

That unspoken remark referred to the commander of the cutter. From head to foot there was not upon him any sign of seamanship. He looked much more like a prosperous merchant, in his perfectly fitting suit of expensive dark blue cloth.

His hat was a costly Panama. There was a brilliant diamond gleaming on the snow-white frill of his shirt front. Nevertheless, he was belted, and a brace of long-barrelled, silver-mounted pistols was supplemented by an elegant cutlass in a silver-ornamented sheath. He was of fair complexion, with dark hair and black, piercing eyes. As he chatted on, so freely, concerning war affairs and other matters, it seemed to Dan that Captain Hutton must be obtaining a great deal of useful information.

"He's sharp," thought Dan. "That's why General Jackson picked him out for this business. Rousseau doesn't seem to care

what he says, but he never speaks of pirates. He talks, though, about smuggling and privateering. I reckon if a ship's crew had all their throats cut, they wouldn't care much whether it was called piracy or not."

It became dull work for him after a while. Even his own thoughts tired him. They went back into all that he had seen of New Orleans. Then they travelled up the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Cumberland, to Nashville, and he wished that he knew how General Jackson was getting along with his new army. After that, however, all his mind and heart were at the old log homestead, and he felt half sick when he imagined his mother and father and all the rest, sitting there without him, this very evening, and telling each other, "I wonder where Dan is now."

That was the last of it. His dream of home faded away, and he lay sound asleep in the bottom of the boat. It was Rousseau himself who kindly lifted him into an easier position, shortly.

"He is only a young recruit, monsieur,"

said Captain Hutton, "but he is an uncommonly good rifle-shot."

"That is all our general need care for," responded Rousseau. "The British musket is not the equal of the American rifle. The one hits its mark all the while, and the other only now and then. The men who shoot straight are always in superior numbers,—especially if they are behind any sort of good breastwork."

It was a starlit night, and it soon grew cooler, with a fresh breeze from the sea. It was easier to understand, then, why Captain Rousseau, or any other wise man in that region, should prefer making such a journey by night rather than by day. The busy mosquitoes, indeed, might be around at any time, but some of the larger flies were in the habit of quitting work at sunset.

Dark, mysterious, gloomy, wonderful, were the winding water-ways through which the cutter slipped along. The monotonous dipping of the oars was enough, of itself, to make one sleepy. Captain Hutton grew drowsy. Black Sam was curled down in a

heap on the boat bottom. So, after a while, was Pierre Chanon, but there were two men in the cutter who were as wide-awake as ever.

Captain Rousseau sat in the stern, steering the boat with perfect skill, his face now and then changing its expression in a way that was not easy to understand. His lips did not open, except for an occasional curt command to his black oarsmen; but once he muttered, in French, between his teeth: "This is the end. We are pirates! We are to be broken up. We will save our necks, at all events. I mean to save mine. Property too. I see that I cannot hope to protect everybody. I must take care of myself, first, at all events."

That was about what might have been expected, reasonably, from any man in his supposed line of trade, whatever nonsense has sometimes been talked about honor among thieves. He said no more during hour after hour, and many miles of crooked bayou were put behind them. It was a little before sunrise that Captain Hutton was awakened

by a slight jar, as if the boat had struck against something. In an instant he was sitting up, and Captain Rousseau greeted him heartily with:—

“Good morning, my friend! I am glad you have slept well. This is the place of Monsieur La Blanche. They will have breakfast ready for us.”

“Good morning, Captain Rousseau,” responded Hutton. “I think I shall be quite ready for a good breakfast. It is not fully light yet. Shall we not disturb them?”

“Not at all,” said Rousseau. “They are aware that we are coming. It is the custom among many of our planters to breakfast early. Ha ha, and then they go to sleep again. My boy?”

Dan had also felt the jar as the boat touched the shore, and his eyes had opened, but they would have closed again if it had not been for Captain Hutton and the polite Frenchman. Up he came now, and stared eagerly about him, but there was not much to be seen at first. Here was the boat in the bayou, and a black man was mooring it

to a projecting wooden pier. At this place, moreover, the narrow stream widened into a basin, a small lake of several acres in extent. His companions were still in the boat, and the Seminole himself was gravely saying to him : —

“ Boy sleep heap. Good. Wake up, now. Go shore. Eat heap. Feel good.”

The fact was that the ferocious red scalper had, from the first, seemed to take a liking to the young marksman, and to consider him in some measure under his own especial care. He waited now, while Dan finished his quick survey of the basin, and of the dense forest growth which bordered on all sides but this.

“ Come along, Dan,” said Captain Hutton, as he stepped ashore, and Dan and the rest followed him.

They found at once a number of other things to stare at. The ground arose the height of only a few feet above the water level, but here was a wide extent of cleared and cultivated land. A hundred yards from the pier, across a closely shaven lawn that was dotted with parterres of flowers and

rows of vines and fruit trees, stood a well-built plantation house. It had verandas, window blinds, and awnings, while beyond it were good outbuildings and other indications of prosperity.

Coming from the house, at this moment, was a tall gentleman in a blue jacket and yellow nankeens, who sent before him a loud and hearty shout of welcome.

"Monsieur La Blanche," as loudly responded the master of the cutter, "Captain Rousseau and his friends have come to take breakfast with you. Permit me to introduce Captain Hutton, aide-de-camp to our glorious leader, General Jackson. With him are his orderly and servant and the great Seminole war chief, Ki-a-wok. With Monsieur Pierre Chanon you are already acquainted."

The reply was hospitality itself, and Monsieur La Blanche seemed also to know how to shake hands with an Indian chief. To Dan he kindly remarked:—

"Come along, my boy. You and the chief are to come with your captain. My people will care for your nigger."

He understood, of course, the social difference between a mere private soldier and a young gentleman, some Tennessee planter's son, who owned slaves, such as Black Sam was supposed to be.

Dan stretched himself, as he made the politest reply he could, for he needed to get out the stiffness caused by his cramped sleeping-place in the cutter. As he did so, the thought in his mind was that never before, not even around Nashville, had he seen so fine a residence with such well-kept grounds as this. Perhaps there were some like it at New Orleans, but he had had no opportunity, as yet, for admiring them.

Either the raising of sugar and cotton and tobacco crops was exceedingly profitable, or the owner of this plantation must have other sources of revenue.

One thing which Dan did not see, however, was a long line of prison-like log barrack-huts, at some distance in the rear of the mansion. They were enough to furnish quarters for the field hands who might cultivate two thousand or more acres of good

land, with all their wives and children. If Dan had seen them, and if he had successfully inquired why Monsieur La Blanche needed such liberal accommodations for his colored servants, he would have discovered that here was only a kind of half-way house, a temporary storehouse for the safe-keeping of some of the valuable black cargoes which from time to time were landed on the beach of Grand Terre Island. At the pier in this basin, moreover, had many a fine lot of imported Africans been sold to planter buyers from the interior.

Dan knew nothing of the commercial character of the place he was in. He was charmed very much by the flowers and lawn and shrubbery and veranda, and he walked on behind Captain Hutton and Rousseau, closely followed by Red Shirt Joe, while Black Sam went away with the boatmen to such quarters as might be accorded to human beings of their rank and complexion.

"Captain Hutton," said Rousseau, "we have no time to spare here. We will go to breakfast without ceremony. We have

been longer than usual on the way, by having to come by the Quereau instead of by one of the shorter bayous. I wished to avoid, not only interruption, but even observation."

"Very wisely, I am sure," replied Hutton. "I am glad that we shall get to Barataria unseen, — or as nearly so as may be."

"We are unreported, at all events," said Rousseau, "and that is of importance."

Dan heard without altogether understanding, and a feeling of awe was creeping over him as he stared at the elegance on all sides, while they entered the mansion and walked on into its ample dining room.

There were no carpets, but the floor was well polished, and the white walls were ornamented, here and there, with pictures and other works of art, such as might have been procured, if not painted, by successful privateers from Barataria.

From the head of the long dining room table, as they entered, a well-dressed woman stepped forward to welcome them, and Dan hardly knew which to admire most, her per-

fect manners or the silver and chinaware on the table.

Madame La Blanche was somewhat dark-complexioned, like her courteous husband, but she was handsome, and her jewels were costly. She smiled after a most gracious fashion, both to Captain Hutton and the rich young Tennessee planter who owned Black Sam. She even held out a many-ringed white hand to Red Shirt Joe, for he was introduced as a distinguished war chief of a powerful tribe; but all the while Dan was vaguely aware of a strangely cruel expression around her mouth and in her eyes, and that there were occasional flashes in the latter. He even heard the red man mutter to himself, "Heap debbil squaw. Ki-a-wok 'calp her. Take hair when Jackson come." She had not at all deceived him by her gracious display of hospitality.

Fish, game, vegetables, fruits, all were of the best, the La Blanche cook was evidently a good one, but, at Captain Rousseau's repeated suggestion, the meal was eaten with almost an appearance of haste.

"We are to have fresh boatmen," he said to Captain Hutton, as they arose from the table. "Now for Barataria."

Madame had seemed deeply interested in the items of war and other news rapidly given her by Captain Hutton, and some of it had seemed to make her bite her lip. As for Dan, he was but a young fellow, altogether inexperienced, and yet he had not failed of noticing some things.

"They're too awfully polite," he thought. "They treat Rousseau as if he were as big as General Jackson. All the niggers get out of his way as if he were on fire. Pierre Chanon himself is afraid of him. That woman is, too, but when Captain Hutton's back was turned she looked at him as if she wanted to bite his head off."

It may have been that the great lady of the slave sale mansion regarded General Jackson's aide as a forerunner of the United States forces which, as she knew, were likely to soon break up forever the profitable business in which she and her husband were engaged. It was needful, nevertheless, that she should

keep up an outward appearance of cordiality, to the very moment when she waved her white handkerchief so gracefully from the veranda, in a farewell to Captain Rousseau.

The scouting party from Nashville was quickly in the boat again, and six fresh, strong pairs of black arms were propelling her swiftly along the winding bayou. Now, however, Dan thought he saw his Seminole friend casting sharp, quick glances at Captain Rousseau, and at the same time fingering the long handle of his tomahawk.

"That Indian has seen something he doesn't like," thought Dan. "What can he mean? I'll have my rifle ready, anyhow, if there's anything coming. We're going in among a lot of pirates, I suppose. I reckon I'm good for one of 'em, if there's to be a fight. Red Shirt Joe is crouching there like a painter."

He had also been saying something to Black Sam, but not in French or English, and the African's hand had gone at once to the hilt of his file-knife, as if he were half ready to draw it.

“That’s another bad sign,” thought Dan. “At all events, none of the boatmen are armed. We could make short work of Pierre Chanon and Rousseau. — No! I reckon there isn’t any danger, just yet. Captain Hutton’s as cool as a cucumber.”

CHAPTER IX

BARATARIA BAY

JUST as bright daylight came, Dan was thinking: "I reckon we'll be out o' this crooked bayou before long. I want to see the bay and the Gulf and the pirate ships."

Or he might have added, "anything else that there is to see," for all sorts of things, including fleets and armies, were chasing each other through his excited brain at the moment when the cutter shot out into the open water and Captain Rousseau remarked:—

"My dear sir, here we are in Barataria Bay. Over yonder is Grand Terre. There are our cruisers, lying at anchor. If you please, I must stop and look at one of them that has just come in. She carries letters of marque and reprisal as a Venezuelan privateer."

"And so she is at war with Spain," said

Captain Hutton. "I have no objection. I'd like to board her with you."

"You may find her worth seeing," replied Rousseau. "She may be part of your errand."

The crew pulled steadily on, and the cutter was steered toward a vessel which Rousseau had been examining through a glass. She lay apparently about two miles in from Grand Terre, and the distance between her and the cutter diminished rapidly. As they drew nearer, Dan became intensely interested in her appearance, but he did not know enough of nautical affairs to have described her. He could not have said: —

"Hermaphrodite brig. Six hundred tons. Four nine-pounder guns on each broadside. A twelve-pounder pivot gun amidships. Looks as if she were built for speed rather than for cargo. She carries the flag of the new republic of Venezuela."

She also looked as if she might be an unpleasant acquaintance for a Spanish merchantman to meet on the high seas. Dan knew little enough of what is called privateer-

ing and had only a faint idea that there was supposed to be a legal limit to the operations of the *Nueva Leon*.

"That's a pirate ship, is it?" he thought. "I hope Commodore Patterson or General Jackson will come and burn 'em all up, before long. There'll be a fight, too, and I'd like to be in it. I could kill a pirate as quick as I would a wolf."

At that moment his eyes had more than their usual glitter in them, and he was actually taking up his rifle when the cutter touched the brig. She seemed to be laden so heavily that she was low in the water, and there was no difficulty in getting on board. Red Shirt Joe was the first to reach the deck, and it occurred to Dan that the Seminole was with some effort suppressing a war-whoop. At all events, he went forward with the springing, elastic movement of a human panther, and his quick glances in all directions took in at once whatever there was to be seen.

There were not many men to be seen, and it might be that most of the brig's crew had gone ashore. One man in a battered naval

uniform which might be that of almost any country, came forward with his hat in his hand and politely welcomed Captain Rousseau and his friends, but he did not address the latter by any name when he spoke to him. Perhaps a finger on a lip had served as a signal for caution. For that matter, he did not speak either French or English, but a South American privateersman was quite likely to be still a Spaniard by birth, and there was nothing suspicious in that fact.

Black Sam walked away at once for a look at the cannon, and the Seminole went with him, but the look on their faces had changed, for both of them understood Florida Spanish pretty well.

"They're not so full of fight as they were," thought Dan. "What can it mean?"

"Captain Hutton," said Rousseau, "what do you think of the *Nueva Leon*?"

"She is a dangerous-looking craft," replied Hutton. "Have you many like her in your service, Monsieur Jean Lafitte?"

A loud, clear laugh sprang from the lips of the asserted Rousseau, but Dan Martin was

about as much startled as if one of the brig's cannon had suddenly gone off.

"You know me, then?" came quickly after the laugh of surprise. "I might almost have expected it. General Jackson did not send a fool upon such an errand as yours. — Yes! I am Jean Lafitte, and we are here because it is best for you and me to have a quiet talk in the cabin before you are seen by any of my friends at Grand Terre."

"I very much desire a conference," said Hutton. "I must have Dan Martin with me, but the others may stay on deck."

"It is better for you and me to talk without witnesses," replied Lafitte, his smooth face clouding darkly. "Do you not know that my brother is in prison in New Orleans? I am threatened with the gallows!"

"Monsieur Lafitte," said Hutton, calmly, "take your man Chanon with you first, and hear all he has to say. I can relieve your mind entirely, when my turn comes. But I may be in need, hereafter, of being able to prove precisely what is the agreement with you that I am about to make for General Jackson."

“Good!” exclaimed Lafitte. “Chanon, come with me and make your report.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” responded Pierre, in better spoken English than he had hitherto seen fit to use. “Plaze the saints; I’ve a dale o’ things to tell yez.”

Away he went with Lafitte, down the companionway, leaving Dan Martin in utter bewilderment.

“Captain Hutton,” he exclaimed, “did you hear that? He’s an Irishman.”

“Indeed I did,” laughed Hutton; “he didn’t deceive me, at any time. I found out at Nashville that Pat Shannon had changed his name only just a little.”

“How did you find him out?” asked Dan. “He wouldn’t speak anything but French.”

“Yes, he did,” said Hutton. “I saw him looking at one of the Nashville girls, and he was saying to himself: ‘She’s a swate colleen, this day. Begorra, but I’ve seen the double of her at Clancarty. It’s the rid-headed girruls that take me eye.’ After that, I didn’t care so much for his French.”

"I reckon he's a pirate, for all that," said Dan. "How this ship is armed!"

"Guns enough," said Hutton. "Pretty heavy ones too, for her size. Look yonder, at the heels o' the masts."

Dan had already been looking, for there were racks full of muskets, pistols, pikes, axes, cutlasses, ready for use, as if the *Nueva Leon* were at that very hour ready to sail into action.

"She's ready for a fight," he said.

"So she is," replied Hutton. "She'd have men on board of her soon enough, too. The Baratarians are looking out for enemies, British or American; they don't know which. We shall find their shore batteries ready, and I want to know what and where they are. Lafitte is prudent in getting ready beforehand to explain our visit, for he might not be able to restrain his desperadoes from knocking us on the head."

Black Sam and the Seminole had drawn near and were listening.

"Ugh!" said the latter, "Ki-a-wok count men on heap big canoe."

He held up a hand with the fingers spread to make five, and the thumb of the other hand was added.

"Six," said Hutton. "Is that all?"

"I heard 'em say so," put in Black Sam. "He say half dozen. W'ile you an' Dan is down stairs, Joe an' I watch out. We'll put a bullet t'rough de fust pirate dat chippers. Kill ebery debbil of 'em — suah!"

"Don't strike in a hurry," said Hutton, gravely; "that's all. I think there is no danger whatever. Keep cool."

"Ugh! Good!" grunted Joe. "Ole chief want kill heap Barataria men.—'Calp 'em!"

The conference between Lafitte and Pierre Chanon, as he was still to be called, was not a long one, and they came on deck again.

"Captain Hutton," said Lafitte, "I am greatly gratified with what Chanon has told me. Will you now come below? I am quite willing that your orderly should come with you. He is to be trusted, undoubtedly, or he would not be here."

"True as steel," said Hutton, and Dan followed them, but he carried his rifle with him

as a companion from whom he did not care to be separated on board that brig.

Black Sam and the Seminole sat down on the deck near the companionway, down which their two friends had descended. Chanon came and sat down by them, bringing with him two of the crew, and these were apparently Frenchmen,—as much so, at least, as himself. Any good judge of men, however, casting a critical eye over that group on the deck of the *Nueva Leon*, might probably have declared that, except for the effect of some well-aimed bullet, the black savage and the red were more than a match for the undersized quartette that sat around them. Sam and Joe were indeed unusual specimens of fighting capacity. Either of them, simply for knife or tomahawk work, would be a dangerous antagonist for several ordinary men.

The chief played with his tomahawk handle as usual, and Sam fingered his knife hilt, but they talked on in a friendly way, nevertheless, about Barataria, the British fleet, and the news from General Jackson's

army. The sailors were genuinely eager to hear, and it may be that every man of them understood how little profit he would have in an encounter with these two news reporters. They had seen fighting, no doubt, and experience is worth something.

The cabin below, into which Lafitte so politely invited his guests, was not large but it was well furnished. He had even ordered refreshments for them, but Captain Hutton firmly refused to touch any of the wines and liquors offered him. As for Dan, his reply was blunt enough.

"No, thank you, sir," he said. "I never drank a drop in my life. I don't ever intend to drink, either."

"Good!" laughed Lafitte. "I will take a glass myself, to the health of General Jackson.—Now, Captain Hutton, I must ask you to lose no time."

"Not a moment," said Hutton, taking out of his breast pocket the papers given him by General Coffee at the Cumberland River landing. "I will read you this. Then I will tell you, verbally, all there is to say

about either the general, or Governor Claiborne, or Commodore Patterson."

"I think I know their plans pretty well already," said Lafitte. "Read on."

His calm face did not change its expression while Hutton was reading and speaking. At the end, he arose and said:—

"This is really better than I had expected. There will be no law proceedings afterward, by the United States, if I and my men come and serve with Jackson's army. We shall have time to remove the greater part of our goods here. The *Nueva Leon*, and two more like her, recently arrived, will not land their cargoes here, but will sail for a safer harbor. My brother will soon be released from jail. As for our batteries, warehouses, and whatever is found here by the United States forces,—when they get here,—all must go. I have known, for a long time, that the end of our establishment would surely come. We are not altogether unprepared for it, but we have some things to do yet. I shall now ask you to go with me to Grand Terre, and I will write an answer

to the general. My men will serve his artillery for him, and handle it well too."

"I'm glad of that!" exclaimed Captain Hutton. "Permit me to say that I think you are showing good sense."

"Good sense?" laughed Lafitte. "Why, we cannot help ourselves. More than that, Captain Hutton, there is no living Frenchman that does not hate England. Just at this time she has humiliated our nation, so that we feel more than usually revengeful. As for our men of other nationalities, I have heard it said, without knowing how truly, that a number of them formerly did business among the West India Islands and were driven out by British gunboats. Some were killed, some were hung, and those who got away might be willing to shoot Englishmen."

"I have no more to say," replied Captain Hutton. "Let us go on deck."

Up they went, and Dan did so with a queer impression that he was carrying up with him more than he ought to know. He said so to Captain Hutton, very cautiously.

"Know too much?" smiled the captain.

"So do I, but we belong to General Jackson. Either of us ought to be ready to be shot rather than tell a military secret. That would be one way of being a spy. Keep your honor, my boy. You must not tell even your father or mother that we met Jean Lafitte here, or gave him any message. Your father's hair would turn gray, if you should break your word of honor."

"It won't be broken," almost gasped Dan. "They may shoot me ten times."

"You're all right," said the captain, kindly. "And now you must keep your eyes about you. See everything."

The cutter and its crew were ready, and so were the two hatchway guards, red and black, who had risen to their feet so quietly and watchfully when Captain Hutton and Dan and Jean Lafitte came on deck. They seemed, nevertheless, to be under a strong impression that only one of the perils of the situation was over, and they were the first to step out of the boat when its nose went up the sloping beach of Grand Terre Island.

Dan went ashore with his eyes about

him, but he saw nothing remarkable right away.

The various vessels that he saw at anchor might or might not be the same kind as the *Nueva Leon*. They were not near enough for him to see whether or not they carried cannon. In this vicinity there were a few rude wharves and piers. He already knew that ships arriving were not accustomed to discharge their cargoes on the Gulf side of the island. They all came around into Barataria Bay, through a channel between the large island and a smaller one. There were, he had heard, several channels, but only one deep enough for sea-going ships, and this one was fairly well guarded by batteries of heavy guns.

On more than one occasion ships of war had been driven away by these batteries, and one British naval expedition had suffered serious damages while attempting to enter the bay.

After one swift survey, however, it was no wonder that Dan's attention, or most of it, was absorbed by an unconscious study of

the singular man who had made himself the ruler of Barataria. How could so seemingly mild and courteous a man have gained the mastery of the ferocious desperadoes who manned the pernicious navy of this den of all evil?

Dan was not by any means the first fellow to be fascinated by Jean Lafitte. All sorts of stories were told of his origin and of his manner of life before he made his appearance in New Orleans. Some of these stories afterward found their way into what is called history. One set of men who knew nothing about it declared that he and his two brothers came from Bordeaux, in France. Another set, equally positive, brought him from Brittany. The first lot stated that the Lafittes had been nothing more than common blacksmiths in Bordeaux. This had at least a leg to stand on, for their first apparent business undertaking in New Orleans had been the management of an extensive smithy, from which they soon went out into wider and very different industries. It might be said, nevertheless, that if there were any

truth in this story, then a careful examination of all the French blacksmiths yet remaining in Bordeaux would have discovered something remarkable. In losing Jean Lafitte, the iron hammerers of that seaport had lost the only blacksmith among them that was thoroughly acquainted with commercial affairs and particularly with the smuggling business. He was also the only nailmaker and horseshoer who could write so good a hand in such elegant language, doing it equally well in French, Spanish, English, or Italian, and who possessed such surpassingly good manners. The idea which tumbles down on examination is that the Bordeaux mechanics of that day were highly educated men, much more so than ever before or since the departure of Jean Lafitte.

That he was a man of unusual ability and some knowledge of law had been discovered by American governors and judges as well as merchants and by the military and naval magnates of more than one great nation. Something more had been found out by the smugglers, slave traders, privateers, and

pirates. These people learned, soon after he set out to become the business manager and dictator of the rough community at Barataria, that among his other accomplishments was the ability to draw a pistol somewhat more quickly than another man and to fire it with sure and deadly effect. He had instantly shot down and killed the first pirate captain who ventured to dispute his supremacy. After that, he made his hold secure upon his reckless associates by providing them with opportunities for selling their cargoes, of whatever kind. They would hardly have known what to do without him and without the peculiar skill he exhibited in dealing with custom-house officers and other severely honest men in power. Nobody disputed that he paid bribes freely, and he also employed the most distinguished lawyers whenever their services were needed.

Here he was, now, walking slowly and placidly along with Captain Hutton, followed by Dan Martin and his pair of remarkable savages. From several directions a number of eager-looking men, armed in full Bara-

taria fashion, were hurrying forward to meet him. At that very hour, if he could have known it, away back in the city of New Orleans, in the house occupied by Governor Claiborne, a number of gentlemen sat in council.

"Governor," remarked one of them, "I think Captain Hutton is taking a great risk. It is a serious question in my mind whether he and his party will ever manage to get out of that place alive."

"Colonel Ross," replied the governor, "Hutton is a soldier. He goes there by order of General Jackson. I did not take the responsibility of sending him. The blood of the pirates is up a little, but I hope that Jean Lafitte will be able to protect him. If he should be murdered, however, it is no fault of mine."

"Commodore Patterson," continued the colonel, who seemed to be in an angry state of mind, "whether Hutton is killed or not, I hope there is no uncertainty as to what we intend to do with Barataria?"

"Not a particle!" exclaimed the commodore. "It will all be done before Jackson

gets here. If he wants pirate gunners, and the Grand Terre batteries, we will have things ready for him. That nest must be cleaned out, though. The days of buccaneering are ended."

"So must the days of free smuggling," responded the governor, with energy. "Not only has it been a burning disgrace to us all, but it is a severe injury to all the honest merchants of Louisiana. They cannot compete with thieves and smugglers. The revenues of this port are little more than a third of what they would be if all the goods sold, up and down the river, had paid regular duties."

"It is demoralizing to the last degree," said the commodore. "But that is nothing to the fact so many vessels bound here and there have never been heard from. They were not all lost in storms at sea. It is my opinion that some of the best of men and women have been made to walk the plank — not so long ago, either — by these devils and wolves that are ruled by Jean Lafitte and his brothers."

“But we can’t prove it,” said the governor, gloomily. “The best we can do is to take General Jackson’s sensible advice. We will break up Barataria, and we will try to have as many pirates as possible shot down by the British when they get here.”

“I wish we could station them all within short range of British cannon,” exclaimed Colonel Ross, fiercely. “I’d like to have them mowed down with grape and canister, seeing we can’t find any means of swinging them up on trees.”

From all the remarks that were made, it was evident that the forces of the United States government were nearly ready to strike the proposed blow. The men who had the matter in charge were eager to make quick and thorough work whenever the order to strike should be given.

Far away to the northward, only an hour or so later, a horseman drew rein in front of a log homestead among the Tennessee forests, and sent a loud hail in through the open door. It was at once answered by a youngster, who came running out to say:—

"Hulloa! Mr. Hodges! They said you'd been to Nashville."

"I'm back again, Jim," replied Hodges, without any sign of dismounting. "I want to see your father."

"Oh, Mr. Hodges," interrupted a female voice, anxiously, "do tell me! Did you learn anything more about Dan?"

"That's what I want to know," came loudly from Captain Martin himself, as he came limping to the doorway, but not seeming, now, to need the help of a crutch. "Let's know! What did you hear?"

"Well," said Mr. Hodges, "'twasn't much. As near as I could make it out, Ginerall Jackson sent him on ahead, to New Orleans, along with a Captain Hutton. He's an aide-de-camp, kerryin' despatches, I don't know what — Black Sam went with 'em. They told me Dan sold his hoss to a land spekilator."

"I told him to do that," said Captain Martin. "How does recruiting come on?"

"Thank God!" exclaimed Dan's mother. "I'm so glad to hear something, anything!"

“Jackson’s army?” said Hodges. “Well! it’s curious ’bout that. Kind o’ so. I was all the while slow to think he could git up one, but they say the men are comin’. Well! Yes! I’ve ’bout made up my mind to go myself, jest as soon as I git my corn in. I won’t wait for hog-killin’ time. I’ll be able to leave the old woman enough to feed her and the children. I jest can’t go back on Andrew Jackson.”

“Hodges!” exclaimed Captain Martin. “If ’twasn’t for this leg o’ mine! You see, I couldn’t get there. It’s hard on me. But my corn’s coming on fine. All the other crops are in,—mostly. Do you go! Go! I’d give almost anything if I could raise a company and go with you.”

“O husband!” murmured Mrs. Martin. “To think of my Dan, in New Orleans! I’m glad somebody’s there with him,—I do believe he can fight, too, and I’ll feel a great deal better,—now I know just where he is, and what he’s doing.”

CHAPTER X

THE BRITISH AT GRAND TERRE

IF Dan Martin's mother knew just where he was and what he was doing, he himself was not so sure about it. Perhaps it was as well that she was too far away to see him.

He was not thinking of his family. He had forgotten everything but the one tremendous and thrilling fact that he was here in Barataria, the world-famous den of all that was said to be left of the old-time buccaneers. Year after year, ever since he could remember, and especially before the blazing logs of the winter fireplace in the Martin house, he had heard his father and mother and their neighbors while away the dull time by telling stories of land and sea. His mother and old grandmother Hodges, among others, were noted for the heaps of yarns which they had collected. Most of these

related to wars with the British and the Indians, but there were also many which may have drifted in among the settlers of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, from the West India Islands and the Southern coast. Dan had heard, therefore, tales of Morgan, Kidd, Black Beard, L'Olonnois, and other rovers. Even since leaving home he had heard, from Captain Hutton himself and the Mississippi flatboat men, with some fulness and accuracy, the manner in which the black flag had at last been driven from the Atlantic. It was believed that all the old strongholds of the picaroons among the Antilles had been discovered, and that the last West India pirate ship had been captured or sunk. Among other things, he had been told that, when any craft of that kind had been captured, even if entirely uninjured, it was of no use to keep her for any honest occupation. No sailor could be induced to serve on board of her. She was a doomed ship, from which the bravest mariners would desert, as soon as they could, like rats from an old barn on fire. She

was believed to be haunted, accursed, and sure to bring bad luck. The days of periodical literature and printed novels had not yet come, at least for Tennessee, but Dan Martin had enough stored in his memory to have been worked up into quite a library of stirring fiction.

Two men who were themselves as good as a pair of novels followed with him the measured paces of Jean Lafitte and Captain Hutton. Black Sam and Ki-a-wok were silent, but their eyes were as busy as Dan's.

"I will show you everything," said Lafitte to the captain. "It is best that you should be able to give General Jackson a full report."

"Will not your men suspect me of being a kind of spy?" asked Hutton.

"Nonsense!" laughed Lafitte. "They know that every inch of this region has been visited by hundreds, of all sorts. There is no secret about it, but you had better see the batteries for yourself. Why, my dear friend, the planters come from as far up as the Ohio River, sometimes, to attend our

auction sales. We have really nothing for a spy to find out."

"You may have something to hide," said the captain, thoughtlessly, "unless you mean to have it all taken by the United States expedition."

"Yes," said Lafitte, in a low, guarded tone. "When they come, as come they will, I think they will find considerable booty. It will not be advisable, nor possible, for us to take away everything. Had you not better make haste with your errand and get back to New Orleans? I beg that you shall be my guest for a day or two only."

"That will do," said the captain. "I don't care to know what you do with your shipping and barges, and so forth."

Jean Lafitte was in most affairs the absolute ruler of Grand Terre, but there are limits to the authority of almost any autocrat in the world. There were other men, sea captains, old rovers, and the like, whom he was continually forced to deal wisely with. Such men as these were at once aroused to angry suspicion of a vague kind, by the pres-

ence among them of an army officer in uniform. Lafitte could see signs of a commotion among them, even as he walked on.

It was prudent, therefore, to gather them at once at the house which served him for a residence, a business office, and a naval and military headquarters. This was about a half mile from the inner or bay shore, near the middle of this island. It was a long and low-built structure of wood. It was now in need of painting, but its interior was profusely furnished, after a style which suggested that the various articles had been collected one at a time, rather than purchased regularly.

Neither Black Sam nor the Seminole was invited to enter the house, but Dan went in with the captain, and he held his breath in a moment after he had crossed the threshold.

It was not a very numerous company which had so quickly responded to Lafitte's summons and assembled in the dining room of his island mansion. Perhaps there was a score of them, after all who were expected had arrived. Refreshments were liberally

provided, of course, and the air was blue with tobacco smoke. It seemed also to be made heavier by the sullen fierceness which glowered in the countenances of the men, as they stared at Captain Hutton and his young orderly.

They did not seem disposed to make remarks, after such introductions as Lafitte deemed it well to give. They were not talking men, as a rule, at any time, and at the present time not one of them knew exactly what to say.

Dan Martin's big stock of pirate stories came crowding into his mind, and all the spirit of adventure in him was heated to the boiling-point. He almost felt as if he could pick out Captain Kidd and Morgan and a lot of other bloody celebrities from among the scarred, bronzed, ferocious-looking buccaneers around him.

"Every man among them," he said to himself, "has scuttled ships and murdered all the people on board. They have seen men and women walk the plank, to go down into the sea or be torn in pieces by the sharks.

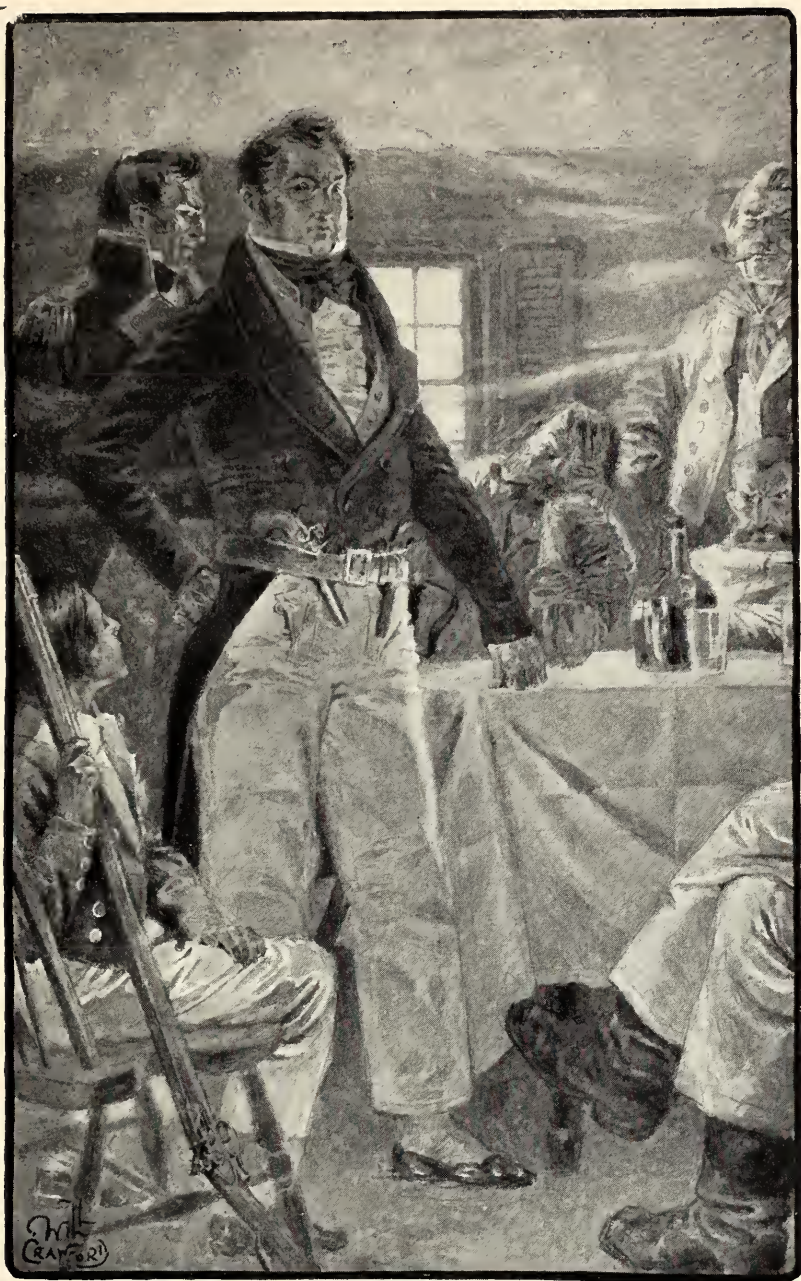
They would cut Captain Hutton's throat and mine too, as quick as if we were chickens. I am right inside of the worst pirate hole on the earth!"

It was a terrible thing to feel sure of, but he saw that Captain Hutton was as cool and polite as if he had been in a parlor at Nashville, and he felt, with a great deal of satisfaction, that his own courage was in first-rate fighting condition.

"If anything happens," he thought, "I'll send my first shot at their commander. I'll put a bullet through Jean Lafitte for bringing us in here to be killed."

The pirate chief, however, was as bland and easy-mannered as ever, offering refreshments, shaking hands with newcomers, but all the while allowing one of his hands to wander frequently to the hilt of a pistol in his belt. Captain Hutton also was ceremoniously polite to every red-handed ruffian introduced to him. Suddenly, Jean Lafitte turned around and rapped loudly upon the table.

"Silence!" he commanded. "We have



Jean Lafitte, the Pirate Chief.

here a messenger from General Jackson. The general is coming to take command at New Orleans. He sends us word that he is not coming as our enemy. He also sends us fair warning. We must now look out for ourselves. Sharp! No more vessels must unload at Grand Terre. The *Nueva Leon* and all others that are ready must sail without delay. Get together all the barges and empty the warehouses. We have plenty of time, thanks to the general. After that, by our agreement, every man who can must go out and help him beat the British. We shall save our property, and have free pardon and an easy time after we have defeated our old enemies."

A chorus of loud exclamations of surprise answered him, and it quickly changed into a round of hearty cheers, for all this was a great deal better than they had expected, and they interpreted it to suit themselves. Certainly, this smiling and politic leader had stretched to the uttermost whatever assurances had been given him by General Jackson's messenger, but this was not the time

or place for attempting to make any corrections. One important thing was accomplished, at all events. The Baratarians were enabled or induced to separate in their minds General Jackson, whom they were asked to serve under, and either of their well-known foes, Commodore Patterson and Governor Claiborne. From these, as they already understood, they were to look for nothing but severe measures; but the general would soon be in control of everything and could then act independently. Moreover, the great Creek Indian fighter was a man they could all appreciate, and they were ready to put confidence in any promises he might choose to make. It was a matter of course, therefore, that their feeling toward Captain Hutton and his party became friendly.

The gathering broke up soon, for all who were there understood the meaning of the advice about vessels and warehouses. Even now, nevertheless, true to their lawless habits and reckless natures, they were not disposed to haste or overwork. They were willing to assure themselves that there would be time

enough for everything. All the more surely, therefore, would the Lafittes and a few of their confidential friends obtain the first use of all the barges and their black crews. It was not difficult to guess whose property would soonest be taken away from Grand Terre, whether it went to plantations, up the bayous, or whether any of it found its secret way to New Orleans warehouses.

"Dan," said Captain Hutton, as the strange assembly scattered, "go with Joe and Sam. See all you can. Lafitte and I are to take a look at the shipping and batteries. I wish there were more good guns to spare for our new works at the city. I'm afraid none could be carried there from this place, but we're going to need every cannon we can get hold of. Every gunner, too."

Out went Dan, and Black Sam hardly tried to suppress his yell of delight at sight of him.

"Massa Dan!" he exclaimed. "I t'ought you mought git yer t'roat cut in dah. Ki-a-wok say he kill a heap of 'em, suah, 'fore he leab dis yer island. Is things all right?"

"Everything's right, Sam," replied Dan. "We three are to scout all over the island."

"Ugh!" said the Seminole, "Ki-a-wok see four on island from Florida. Two Red Stick Creek, two Spaniard, spy for redcoat. Want kill."

It was simply a fact. The British commander at Pensacola, with several hundred wild warriors at his disposal, was very naturally employing some of them as scouts in the enemy's country. He had white spies elsewhere, no doubt, but a pair of half-breeds, acquainted with the coast and known of old to some of the buccaneers, were just the persons required to obtain for him information of the state of affairs at Grand Terre. Neither their coming or going would probably be noticed by Lafitte and his associates.

Whatever Captain Hutton and Jean Lafitte were doing that afternoon, Dan Martin and his friends were permitted to stroll around at will. They had chat after chat, too, with very remarkable new acquaintances, every man of whom was eager for the latest

news concerning either the British fleet or the American army. They seemed, indeed, to be already pretty well informed as to the land and naval forces of England which were intended to operate in the Gulf of Mexico. Dan asked questions on his own account, with some care, and he became impressed with the idea that all these men liked the proposal made by Captain Hutton to give them the future protection of General Jackson.

Red Shirt Joe shortly disappeared. It was not until near sunset that his two friends met him again, sauntering along in company with a wild-looking pair of Baratarians. He left them, but was as silent as a post until they three were out of the reach of listening ears.

"Where've you been?" asked Dan.

"Ugh!" he replied, "chief saw Creek spy."

"Hullo!" said Dan. "Did you find those fellows? Where are they now?"

"Ugh!" grunted the Seminole, disdainfully. "Half Red Stick Creek, half Span-

iard. Say Ki-a-wok turn redcoat again. Talk Proctor. Talk Tecumseh."

"What did you say to 'em?" asked Dan.

"No talk," said the Seminole. "Heap fool Creek go drunk. Walk into swamp. Go sleep. No wake up. Spy gone."

That was enough. No further information could be expected from him, and Dan did not ask for any. It made him shudder to even guess what had become of the grim Seminole's hereditary enemies.

"I wonder what the pirates'll say when they find 'em," he thought. "It's awful!"

He need not have worried himself. That was not a time when the dwellers on Grand Terre were likely to give much attention to the finding of a pair of red-skinned adventurers, stark dead and scalped, among the rushes near the eastern channel. The natural supposition would be that there had been a quarrel between them and some hot-tempered Baratarians, and that the strangers had gotten the worst of it. They were not the first unwise men to be found dead on that island, and rarely

had such things occasioned any general excitement.

Night came, and it seemed to Dan to come slowly, for he found himself as tired as if he had been upon a long deer hunt in his Tennessee forests. In spite of that, however, when at last he lay down on the bed assigned him in a wing of the mansion of Jean Lafitte, he could not at once go to sleep. The fact was that, if his own log house home were haunted with wild legends, like so many ghosts, what could be said about this place. Who could tell what deeds had been done under this roof, or what terrible tales of the sea had ended, so to speak, when the men who were concerned in them had reached this headquarters of the desperadoes of the Gulf and the Antilles?

It seemed a dark corner of the earth, made darker by invisible shadows.

Dan did at last go to sleep, but before a great while he awoke. He wakened from a vivid dream of a fight at sea, and it seemed to him that he had actually heard the roar of cannon as the dream ship he was in, a United

States sloop of war, began to try her guns upon a monster that was flying the black flag, with its skull and crossbones.

"It was only a dream," he said, sitting up in bed. "But it was an awfully real dream. The pirates had just been sinking a merchant ship. Hark! What's that?"

Through the window near him, with its gay green lattice and mosquito netting, came at that moment the far-away roar of a heavy gun.

"What can it be?" exclaimed Dan. "It's the first cannon I ever heard. Tell you what!—something new's coming. I won't get up yet, though. I wouldn't know which way it was best to go."

Down he lay again, listening intently, but he was indeed dreadfully tired. No other thunder came to keep him awake, and, before long, his eyes closed again. This time his slumber was dreamless, but there were other eyes which were not shut after the report of that cannon came.

An elegantly furnished chamber had been allowed to Captain Hutton, and the brave

fellow had gone to bed as calmly as if he were in an eastern city hotel. He was a soldier, however, and he had arisen instantly at the first booming sound, — the one Dan had heard in his dream. He went to a window and was waiting for further developments, as much in doubt as his orderly concerning the meaning of a cannonade, then and there. A hasty step and a lighted lamp came into the room behind him.

“Captain Hutton, my dear friend, I knew you would be disturbed.”

“What does it indicate, Monsieur Lafitte?” asked Hutton. “Do your cruisers fire signal guns on arriving?”

“No,” said Lafitte. “The firing is from our channel battery. The first gun sent me word that our scout boats report an armed vessel in the offing. The second, double guns, says that the stranger is an Englishman. I think you ought not to be here, in case of the arrival of British forces.”

“Undoubtedly,” said Captain Hutton. “My errand is done, anyhow.”

“It is completely done,” said Lafitte. “If

you please, therefore, I will have a boat ready, at an early hour to-morrow morning, to take you to New Orleans."

"It is my duty not to remain here an hour longer than is necessary," said Hutton.

"Good," replied Lafitte; "but I will say this much more, I am not at all in fear of an actual attack at this date, by the British. We have already shown them that we can beat off anything but a much stronger force than they are likely to spare from their other plans, just now. At all events, I have one favor to ask. I may need to send, to you or to Governor Claiborne, messages in writing, or in words, which I dare not trust to any of my own men. I want you to leave here your orderly and his two servants, the nigger and the Indian."

"Just the right thing!" heartily responded Captain Hutton. "Martin is a brave fellow, intelligent, trustworthy, and that pair can handle a canoe."

"That is what I shall send them away in," said Lafitte, "as soon as I know what this British arrival means. Will you be good

enough to take another nap now? I will have you aroused a little after daylight. We may know more then."

"I need all the sleep I can get," said Hutton, cheerfully. "I don't think keeping awake would do me any good."

"Not any," said Lafitte, as he left the room; and the thought of Captain Hutton was:—

"I'm glad the British are here. It will have a good effect upon the Baratarians. It gives them a sharp warning."

Dan Martin was not awakened as early as was his commanding officer. When he was summoned, however, he sprang to his feet with a vague idea that there was fighting of some sort on hand. His mind grew clearer while he was putting on his clothes, and the cannon report he had heard in the night was still in his ears when he hurried out into the veranda on that side of the house.

"The darky that called me said something about breakfast," he remarked; but at that moment he was hailed with:—

"Dan! this way. Don't say a word."

Dan obeyed in silence, for within a few feet of him was Captain Hutton, followed closely by Ki-a-wok and Black Sam. These may have already received their instructions, but they listened intently while the captain informed Dan concerning his new duties and his own immediate departure.

"I'm ready," said Dan. "We three can find our way through the bayous to the Mississippi, I reckon."

"Ugh!" said the Seminole. "Heap boy. Ole chief know bayou. Keep hair on head."

"Now, Dan," said the captain, "watch out. Keep your eyes open. Don't be seen by any Englishman if you can help it. Be ready to start at any moment. Go in and eat your breakfast. Only Lafitte himself and the crew of the boat that takes me know I'm getting away. Good-by!"

"Good-by, Captain Hutton," began Dan, but the Seminole interrupted him.

"Ugh!" he said. "Boy shut mouth. Hutton go."

Away walked the captain, and he was shortly joined by Jean Lafitte. Black Sam

remained outside while Dan followed an obsequious mulatto who offered to show him where he was to eat breakfast.

He ate like a very hungry boy, in spite of the somewhat bewildering change in his circumstances; but hardly had he arisen from the table when he once more heard the roar of cannon.

"They ain't shooting at anything, I reckon," remarked Dan, aloud. "The captain said those others were only signal guns, and I'd be likely to hear more of 'em. They may be answering each other."

He was right in that guess. The British sloop of war *Sophia*, from the squadron at Pensacola, under command of Captain Lockyer, of the royal navy, had come to anchor off the mouth of the main channel leading into Barataria Bay. She was not within range of any of the shore batteries, and it was not yet known on the island, certainly, whether her errand there was one of war or peace. She was, at all events, the strongest cruiser that had ever yet visited the "pirates' home," as some people called

the prosperous commercial establishment of the Lafitte brothers. Nevertheless, her sounding signals had been duly replied to by the battery guns, and nearly the entire population of Grand Terre was hurrying to the seaward beach to get a look at the unexpected newcomer. Not counting colored men and women or other non-combatants, nor the crews of vessels preparing for speedy departure, there were on the island, that morning, over three hundred fighting men, well armed, and in a state of mind which bordered upon desperation. The presence of the *Sophia*, however, had a strong tendency to confirm them in any favorable opinions which they might be forming concerning the agreement with General Jackson. All the more did it become apparent to Jean Lafitte, then and afterward, that the motley gathering under his command would not be likely to trust any British offers of conciliation, if such were to be made. There were too many bitter hatreds, old revenges, and national grudges in the fierce hearts of the Baratarians.

“The fact is,” Lafitte said to himself, “I believe that our best chance for really saving anything is to stick to Jackson. If we don’t, we may lose every dollar we have, whether it’s here on the island, or up among the plantations, or stowed in the New Orleans warehouses.”

So he began to feel a certain kind—his own kind—of patriotic devotion to the United States, and General Jackson.

CHAPTER XI

BRITISH DIPLOMACY

THERE is an official record that the *Sophia* fired her signal guns off the island of Grand Terre on the morning of the 3d of September, 1814. This record, however, makes no mention of Dan Martin, Black Sam, or Red Shirt Joe, as being among the buccaneering community which gathered on the beach.

The black man and the red were exchanging brief commentaries, now and then, but they were not speaking English except when the Seminole remarked:—

“Ugh! Heap big canoe. Heap big gun. Red Stick Creek on redcoat ship. Kill ‘em!”

It appeared as if he were more and more definitely associating the British with his old enemies, in his revengeful mind. At the

same time, most of the buccaneers around him were as ready to kill as he was, and he might therefore feel an increasing war-path fellowship with them. As for Black Sam, anything in a red coat was an enemy of both himself and Andrew Jackson. He was patriotic enough, so far as any required killing of British soldiers might be concerned, but there was another important feature of the situation to him. Whether or not he had been born in America, his parents or grandparents had been born in Africa, and he was well aware of the general character of the slave trade. He was himself a runaway slave, and, since reaching Grand Terre, he had visited the slave pens.

He had found there several scores of recently arrived Africans, manacled, imprisoned, waiting for purchasers from the interior. He knew, therefore, by personal inspection, that this was a depot of the Congo commerce, and that these Baratarians were negro stealers. He did not reason about it at all, but he decided that they were his natural enemies, and hated them to the best of his

ability. As he turned and looked at them, he grumbled:—

“ I’d like to put a knife into ebery man ob ’em. Shoot ’em. Drown ’em. I reckon ole Gin’ral Jackson’ll clean out dis place.”

It made another bond between him and the American army, and he was also well aware that much of his present security from being manacled and sold “ up river ” belonged to the fact that he was regarded as the property of the Martin family, and in due attendance on his young master.

Dan was staring hard at the *Sophia*. She was too far away for him to count her guns, but he was impressed with the idea that she was by all odds the largest ship he had yet seen.

“ She could knock the *Nueva Leon* all to pieces,” he was thinking. “ The United States hasn’t any war ship in the Gulf that can fight with her. It’s too bad that our country hasn’t any of the biggest kind of ships.”

He had heard all about Commodore Perry’s victory on Lake Erie, and all the stories of

the brilliant battles of our young navy had been talked about from house to house along the Western frontier. His father, however, had fully explained to him the truth of the matter, and he knew that the United States was as yet no match for England on the sea. As for her land forces, the ideas prevalent in the West were not all such as were then held in the Eastern states or as afterward sneaked their libellous way into printed history.

With clearer sight than that of some statesman, and many historians, the men of the West knew that the British land forces in America had been utterly defeated, after a few successes at the outset, like the fruitless captures of Detroit, Chicago, and other frontier posts. They had been driven out of Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, and Upper Canada, and their great league with Tecumseh and the redmen had been broken like a glass bottle. Their allies, the Creeks, had also been bloodily defeated. Their entire plan of operations at the North had miserably broken down. Their barbarously successful raid upon the unfortified city of Washington had

been useless as a military movement, and a stupid blunder politically. All that now remained to be done, apparently, was to defeat their last and colossal blunder of trying to take and hold the valley of the Mississippi from its lower end, after having been ignominiously driven out of its centre by General Harrison.

"Come, Martin," said a courageous voice near him. "I want you in my boat. You must be able to report fully to Captain Hutton. There's a boat leaving that ship."

There was a great jump at Dan's heart, for not only here was a new and unexpected adventure, but he felt as if great honor had been conferred upon him. It was nothing of the kind, for it was only the cunning of Jean Lafitte to present an appearance of not concealing any of his operations from General Jackson. Away went Lafitte and Dan, therefore, to a large yawl that was waiting for them at the shore of the channel.

Thus far, all the signals and other indications were of a friendly character, but Jean Lafitte knew that every British officer, civil,

naval, or military, regarded him as an outlaw, fit only to be hanged wherever captured, with scanty ceremony as to any form of trial and conviction.

The boat from the *Sophia* was rowed by a crew of eight British sailors. In the stern sat three men in brilliant uniforms. One was Captain Lockyer of the *Sophia*, a distinguished and very capable officer. By him sat his second lieutenant, and with them was a captain from the army named McWilliams.

Jean Lafitte's boat was smaller, pulled by four Baratarian sailors, and his only attendant was Dan Martin, in whose brain was swimming around a wild question as to whether or not he was there to represent General Jackson and the United States. Dan had remarked that Lafitte was wearing the most expensive rig that could be made for him by a New Orleans tailor. His diamond pin was superb, and his ordinary cutlass had been replaced by an elegant dress sword, in a gold-mounted sheath. His face was all one smile of affability, but just behind the smile was a gray look, and his coal-black

eyes flashed fiercely, now and then, after he bade his rowers hold in and wait for the nearer approach of the strangers,—who were now in easy range of a nine-pounder cannon levelled at them from the channel battery.

He was a man of extraordinary nerve and coolness. He was fully informed that the end of his small and lawless empire was near at hand. His life was in deadly danger from enemies of several kinds. He was convinced that he could expect from English authorities only a temporary truce, smooth words, fair promises, and then the guns of her cruisers and the sharp sentences of her courts. He was as sure, also, that Governor Claiborne's purposes were inflexible, and that his Louisiana foes were bitterly determined upon vengeance.

Nevertheless, his deep cunning told him that the greatest power of all, so far as his life and property were concerned, would, in a few days, be the arbitrary military authority of Andrew Jackson; and he wisely decided to trust the American commander-in-chief, whatever enticements might be held out to him by anybody else.

This was all a wonderful romance to Dan Martin. The tossing sea, upon which he had never floated; the beautiful ship of war, with the muzzles of her broadside guns showing grimly at her open ports; the pirate island, with its really dangerous and well-posted batteries; the great bay beyond, with all those privateers and smuggling craft, if such they were, riding at anchor, — here was Jean Lafitte, the famous merchant-pirate, and coming yonder, was the other boat, representing the empire of Great Britain.

Dan was shortly near enough to be able to admire the trim blue uniforms of the British naval officers, with their queer, half-moon-shaped chapeaus, in strong contrast with the red and gold uniform and cocked hat of Captain McWilliams. All were very fine, and the three wearers were good-looking men.

They were now so close that Captain Lockyer himself sent forward a loud hail. After giving his name and rank, he asked: —

“Can you tell me if Mr. Jean Lafitte is now at Barataria?”

“He is, sir,” replied Lafitte. “I have no

doubt that he will be glad to receive you at his headquarters. I will accompany you to the shore, and conduct you to the house."

"Thank you," said Captain Lockyer. "I will come, with pleasure, for I very much wish to see him."

On they went, side by side, but not at once to the beach and the crowd, for Lafitte prudently led the way through the channel and into the bay, explaining that by so doing they would land very much nearer the hospitable mansion of Monsieur Jean Lafitte.

As the two boats shot out into the bay, however, all reasons for further concealment disappeared; and Captain Lockyer was startled by a low, clear voice which came to him across the few yards of water between them.

"Captain Lockyer," it said, "I am Jean Lafitte. What are you here for?"

"'Pon my soul! I thought so!" sprang from the bearded lips of Captain McWilliams.

Whatever may or may not have been the previous suspicion of Captain Lockyer, he preserved his coolness perfectly.

"I am glad to meet you in precisely this way," he said, at the same time holding up and presenting what seemed a somewhat bulky paper parcel. "This is for you from my commander, Captain Percy, with full power from higher authorities; that is, from the representatives of his Majesty the king."

Perhaps the precise words and manner, somewhat bungling, indicated that he was internally more disturbed than he would have willingly confessed, but there were difficulties in the mind of such a man as to dealings with pirates on their own ground, or water.

Not that Jean Lafitte was understood to have ever commanded a ship. He was notoriously a landsman, not a sailor. He was a merchant, a commercial agent or manager, distinguished from most other commercial magnates only by the nature of his business and by a readiness to shoot any of his business partners or employees who might venture to dispute his authority as head of the house.

The boats came together, and Lafitte took the packet. It was addressed simply to "Mr. Lafitte," and he at once decided that its contents were to be read and considered at his headquarters on shore.

Those three English officers were very brave men, for they went on without a sign of hesitation, although Lafitte himself cautioned them to preserve silence in view of possible danger. They understood his meaning better when they neared the landing-place. Their coming had been watched and waited for. Most of the Baratarians were over on the seaward beach, but enough were here, for a number had raced across the island to meet the boats. Here they were, and even the British uniforms seemed to arouse their anger. Loud voices in several languages made mention of British naval doings in the West Indies and elsewhere, and especially of repeated blows at Baratarian prosperity. Even the recent communications of General Jackson, so far as they were known, added to the excitement, but the main thing was that England, to her great honor, had always been

the uncompromising foe of all law-breaking on the sea. She had done her duty in that matter, and had well earned the hatred of all buccaneers.

The clamor increased as the boats reached the shore, but Lafitte had always a trusty bodyguard of stalwart rovers whose personal interests were tied up with his own, and who therefore obeyed him blindly. These men closed around him now and kept back the chattering mob until he had time to address them and bring them to reason. He was then able to convince them, of course, that any violence to his distinguished guests would bring at once to Barataria Bay the powerful British squadron at Pensacola. His argument consisted of heavy guns and many of them, accompanied by a strong force of British marines and Creek Indians. His authority seemed to be pretty well restored as soon as his outlaws took time to consider and comprehend the situation. Sullenly, gloomily, with curses on their lips, and weapons half drawn from the sheath, they drew aside and permitted Lafitte to conduct the Englishmen

to his quarters. The next persons behind them, as they went, were Dan Martin and his comrades.

"Ugh!" growled the Seminole, "'calp 'em all. Take redcoat hair. Kill a heap!"

"Martin," said Lafitte, unheard by any but these two, "keep near the house. I shall want you. I can't say how soon. Tell Sam to have that canoe ready. Nobody must see you when you go away."

"All right, sir," replied Dan; and Sam said: —

"Canoe ready now, sah. Yes, sah. I's ready, too, an' Joe. We's youah men, sah."

The British officers, steady-nerved veterans that they were, behaved admirably, but they followed their host somewhat closely as they accepted his polite invitation to walk into his house. They could not feel entirely sure of his control over the miscellaneous crew that swarmed in the verandas and around the building.

A dinner had been ordered in advance, and the guests did not have long to wait before they were ushered into the dining

room. Here they could hardly repress their exclamations of astonishment. The skilful cooks of the ruler of Grand Terre had done their best. Game was in season and there were several kinds on the table, both flesh and fowl. The finest shell-fish and game fish, with abundant fruits, choice wines, unsurpassed cigars, were offered them by polite servants, and there was no fault to be found with the silver and china ware. All this may have suggested to them, however, that the peculiar commerce of Barataria was altogether too profitable to be permitted any longer by the military and naval servants of his Majesty the king of England.

The dinner lasted long, for many things could be discussed conversationally. It was over, at last, and Lafitte was ready for the consideration of the several important documents delivered to him.

One of these was a copy of the sounding proclamations which had been addressed to and circulated among the people of Louisiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Territory of Mississippi; calling upon them to throw

off the oppressive rule of the ill-starred republic of the United States and return to their ancient allegiance to the British crown. These publications had already been the subject for endless fun among General Jackson's riflemen. They had been signed and issued by a Colonel Edward Nichols, as the accredited agent of Great Britain in this part of America.

The second document was similarly signed and did great credit to the persuasiveness of Colonel Nichols. It called upon Lafitte and his brave followers to enter the service of England. Jean himself was promised the rank of captain, with pay, and his subordinates were in like manner to have British commissions in accordance with their present grades in the Baratarian forces, with grants of lands, as soon as the said lands should be duly won from the Americans. All the Grand Terre batteries and shipping were to be transferred to Great Britain, at full prices for each separate article, no matter where it originally came from. The Baratarians, of course, were to give up their pres-

ent business and were to agree not to do any more harm to English or Spanish commerce, whatever ruin they might work for that of the United States in this war.

“That is,” thought Lafitte, “we are to be wiped out, anyhow, and then we are to share the luck of General Pakenham and his army, whether it is to be good or bad.”

A third document was a capital appendix to the brilliant offers of Colonel Nichols. It was a general address from Captain Percy, of the British navy, to “the inhabitants of Barataria,” whatever might be considered the boundaries of that great nationality, setting forth some of their evil deeds and demanding that they should make immediate reparation for the same, under penalty of utter destruction if they refused. It also offered them free pardon, if they should at once enter, for a limited time, the service of the king.

“This,” thought Jean Lafitte, “lets the entire cat out of the British bag.”

A fourth document was only a copy of Captain Lockyer’s general instructions from

Captain Percy, his superior officer, commanding the squadron at Pensacola.

It spoke of several things which were to be done after the proposed capture of Mobile, but it did not suggest any reason why a sound-minded British commander should waste his precious time at Mobile, instead of pushing on at once to New Orleans and occupying that place before the arrival of General Jackson. This is a matter which has never yet been explained. It was one of the many curious puzzles on both sides of the blundering War of 1812.

Jean Lafitte spoke with the most profound politeness of these several propositions. He made so strong an impression upon Captain Lockyer that the latter joyfully added a promise of thirty thousand dollars in cash, in addition to the captaincy, the free pardon, and the captured Louisiana plantation. Beyond a doubt, it was all very tempting, or it might have been so to any man less positive than was Jean Lafitte in his conviction that Andrew Jackson would be able to defeat the British forces at New Orleans.

“Besides,” thought the calculating Baratania merchant, “I have a great deal more than thirty thousand dollars’ worth stored there now. It will all become British army plunder if General Pakenham should whip General Jackson.”

Something like a strong feeling of buccaneer American patriotism grew upon him while he was making his shrewd cash and other calculations. Still, he assented, with apparent cordiality, to whatever Captain Lockyer had yet to say. Then he pleaded, with a good show of reason, that all this was very sudden, and that he himself was not altogether an absolute monarch in the empire of Baratania. He must have time given him for reflection, and he must also consult with some of his most confidential and influential associates. One of these was in a vessel out on the bay. No objection could be made, of course, and away he went, the British officers remaining at his headquarters. Somehow or other, he seemed to return only just in time to protect them from what threatened to be a more dangerous tumult than the first,

among the boisterous Baratarians. He declared then that the personal safety of his guests required their immediate return to the *Sophia*. Lafitte himself accompanied them to their boat, and they may have been well pleased when they were actually rowing through the channel from the bay to the Gulf and were beyond reach of the guns of, for instance, such peaceful traders as the *Nueva Leon*. There were other craft there that were as like her as two peas, and all were manned by seamen whom Andrew Jackson was willing to enlist because of their known practice and skill in handling cannon. Dan Martin had waited and followed, according to orders, and he saw the British ambassadors rowed away to rejoin their ship of war. He was otherwise alone, however, for Black Sam and the Seminole had disappeared.

“Martin,” said Lafitte, “I am very glad you are here. I have no time to lose, nor you either. There will be a packet of despatches ready for you as soon as I can write the letters that I must send to New Orleans. It will be as much as your life is worth to

have it known, for some of my men are getting crazy. Not a soul must even suspect, or you will have your throat cut by some stupid fellow before you can get away from Grand Terre. Don't stay too near the house. I will send for you. My boy, I will give you five hundred dollars if you will get one paper to Captain Hutton!"

He was accustomed to the giving of bribes, but such an offer at this time may have been a betrayal of the strong anxiety that was increasing upon him. As for Dan, he opened his eyes in utter astonishment.

Five hundred dollars? Why, at the current price of Tennessee land, that would give him a farm of over three hundred acres, all paid for. It stunned him for a moment, but a hot flush came into his face, for something seemed to tell him: —

"Dan, your father'd rather see you die than have you take a bribe!"

"No, Mr. Lafitte," he said firmly, "I'm a soldier. I don't want any pay for doing my duty. I belong to General Jackson — I'll see that Captain Hutton gets your despatches, though."

Lafitte stared at him curiously, and then he walked away without another word, for he may not have been altogether unable to understand a point of honor.

CHAPTER XII

THE CANOE PARTY

DARKNESS settled at last over the wide waters of Barataria Bay, over Grand Terre, and the bayou-threaded Delta of the Mississippi. The *Sophia* lay idly at her anchorage, well out, but in a position from which her guns commanded the mouth of the channel. That was the extent of her control, however, for there were other ways of escape from the harbor of the buccaneers.

There were lights shining from the windows of the Lafitte residence and a number of other houses. In more than one of these were gatherings of the Baratarians for angry consultation concerning the events of the day and their own rapidly clouding affairs. The immediate friends of the Lafitte brothers were busy among those coteries, and the tide of public opinion was setting strongly in favor of leaving all things in the care of

Jean Lafitte, as usual. His eldest brother, Pierre, was temporarily absent, and the second, Dominique, was in jail at New Orleans.

Among some dense rushes at the shore of the eastern end of Grand Terre Island a bark canoe lay waiting with two men in it. The canoe had a somewhat elderly appearance, but it was in good order. It was such an affair as might have been constructed by the Natchez Indians, before their overthrow, or it may have wandered into the Delta from among the Creeks or other tribes along the shore of the Gulf of Mexico.

"Ugh!" said one of the men. "Hark! Boy come!"

"Keep 'till," growled Black Sam. "Dan hab got away from Lafitte. Ready now!"

Stooping, yet running, half breathless with excitement and exertion, Dan Martin came hurrying toward the canoe until he was somewhat checked by the rushes.

"Sam! Joe!" he said eagerly, "push off as soon as I'm in. I'm followed!"

"Quick!" said Sam. "We's ready!"

In went Dan, sitting down at once in the

middle, and the canoe began to move, for the paddles were at work.

“We have him!” exclaimed a hoarse voice just beyond the nearest rushes, and a dark form glided swiftly out of them, followed closely by two others.

A hand was laid upon the stern of the boat and fierce words in Spanish were accompanied by the gleam of an uplifted cutlass. A bearded face appeared, dimly, for a moment, but there was heard a low, dull sound, a thud, and the face disappeared. Away shot the canoe, driven by the strong arms of Black Sam, while the Seminole put down his tomahawk to take up his paddle, uttering no sound but a hoarse “ugh!”

In a moment more, several fiercely wrathful voices were pouring forth execrations, as a group of disappointed Baratarians examined the cloven skull of their too hasty comrade, lying among the rushes.

As soon as Dan and his friends were well out into the darkness, there was little danger to them from firearms, if any had been used; but the Baratarians did not try

their pistols, with the whole bay for a target. They had no boat at hand and immediate pursuit was out of the question, but, at the moment, for some inscrutable reason, this affair also was charged by them to the account of Captain Lockyer and his embassy.

Perhaps only the slain man himself had really identified Dan Martin and his friends. To the others, the canoe had been a British boat, manned by spies from the *Sophia*, and it was so reported to Jean Lafitte, shortly afterward.

“If you are right about it,” he replied very quietly, “you should not have allowed them to escape. As to the man-of-war, you will soon see that I can manage to send her away. Then we shall have all the time we need to take care of ourselves.”

Their confidence in the subtlety and other resources of their business manager grew stronger than ever as they listened. Not one of them suspected that their escaped British boat was already entering Bayou Quereau, carrying Jean Lafitte’s despatches to the New Orleans authorities and General Jackson.

Dan Martin knew something about canoes. He had often been in a dugout, but this was his first ride in a clipper made of birch bark. His first mental exercise, after his narrow escape from the Baratarian's cutlass, was a wondering at the speed with which that canoe could be paddled by the two strong experts who were now sending it along over the water. It might be that a whole tribe of red men could have been searched without discovering another pair who could do quite so well with hollow bark and paddles.

"No feller kitch up wid us," cheerfully remarked Black Sam.

"Good!" said the Seminole. "Heap dark. Watch out. See more boat."

His meaning was this. The water of the bay was quiet. So far as they knew, they had not been noticed by anybody on board any of the vessels at anchor. Other boats were all the while coming and going between these and the shore, without questioning or interference. There was no sort of harbor police on duty. The one point of

interest was, however, that a number of heavily laden barges had now been discerned, creeping away toward the northerly side of the bay. It might be that these were conveying no more than their customary freight, destined for New Orleans and elsewhere. Or they might contain goods which were removing in consequence of the stern warnings received by Jean Lafitte. At all events, none of them could catch up with the canoe. They put a thought into the minds of her crew, nevertheless. What if similar barges, manned by reckless men, were already ahead of them? If this were so, and if there were pirate barges in Bayou Quereau, there might be serious difficulties before them.

Dan Martin had no watch, but he was sure that hours had gone by, after leaving the bay, and it occurred to him that he must be drawing near the La Blanche place. He said so to his companions.

"Ugh!" grunted the Seminole. "Boy wait. Lie down. Sam lie down. Joe paddle."

In the very moment of following his instructions, Dan saw lights, like swinging lanterns, a little distance ahead, on the left, and he remembered the pond-like basin in front of the La Blanche wharf.

"Massa Dan," said Sam. "Lie low, jes' now. See Joe."

Very little of the Seminole could have been seen, indeed, by anybody outside of the canoe. He was crouching in the stern with only his head and arms above the edge of the bark. The movement of the canoe was slow now, and it was creeping along the reedy margins so closely that it must have been pretty well hidden.

Several minutes passed, and for Dan to lie still any longer was almost impossible.

"I'll just lift my head," he thought. "It isn't any bigger than Joe's."

He cautiously raised it and looked. Here, indeed, was the basin. Over there was the pier, and beyond it was the mansion of the successful aristocrat slave-dealer and his stately, hospitable, handsome wife. At the pier, however, were moored three barges

and with these were several smaller boats, like yawls from merchant ships. There were a number of lanterns. What was more important, a bright bonfire had been kindled on the shore between the pier and the house. By the glare from this fire, Dan saw a double file, a "coffle," of naked blacks, male and female, driven along, lashed onward from the barges and the pier, toward the mansion.

"They are going around to the slave pens in the rear," thought Dan. "Jean Lafitte can save all that kind of property. He can move it easier than he can some of his other goods. I reckon every slave'll be gone from Grand Terre before any British or American forces get there."

"Ugh!" said the Seminole. "Watch out. See boat come. Keep 'till, now."

He began to ply his paddle more vigorously, and the canoe slipped rapidly along among the shadows of the bank. There was no help for it, however. The vivid glow of the bonfire shot across the basin, and there were unshadowed places which the canoe

must pass. Suddenly loud shouts arose among the men who were on the barges and the pier.

"They've seen us!" exclaimed Dan, and a stern, resonant voice came to them across the water, commanding them to halt.

"Come over!" it added. "Pull in this way, or I'll send a bullet through you!"

Fierce shouts and profanity followed the summons, but Black Sam was up now, and two paddles were instantly at work. So, at the same moment, were four oars in one of the yawl boats, but no answer was sent back to the summons.

Bang — bang — bang — pistol shots first, then the louder reports of muskets, and even the cracking of rifles, told in what deadly earnest were the Baratarians. Dan heard the whizzing of bullets over his head, and saw the water spatter where they struck.

"One ball has hit the canoe," he said. "One more. Tore a hole too. Those fellows are good marksmen. It's an awfully short range. Glad it isn't daylight."

Well he might be, and also that the fire-

arms of that day required considerable time for reloading. Every gun-barrel that was emptied in that hasty volley was of no more use until powder and ball should be put into it again, and its clumsy flint-lock duly primed for shooting.

That was what saved them. That and the fact that no mere yawl, constructed for safety in rough sea water, could win a race, a stern-chase race, with an Indian canoe, paddled by Ki-a-wok and Black Sam.

In a minute they were out of the basin and were rushing along through the half darkness which brooded over the narrow bayou, while a shrill Seminole war-whoop, first, and then a long-drawn, mocking African yell from Black Sam, went back to the ears of the baffled Baratarians.

"Ugh!" said the Seminole. "Make 'em heap mad. Watch out now. Mebbe more boat ahead."

"S'pose we ketch up wid one," said Sam. "All right. We tell 'em we's gwine on an errand foh Jean Lafitte. Den if dey's not satisfy, we kin shoot quick. I's ready. I

don' want no pirate a-cuttin' my t'roat. Massa Dan, is youah rifle primin' all right?"

Dan had been examining it, hunter-like, and he reported well of it. So he did of both the other rifles and his belt pistols. On the whole, therefore, that canoe might be considered a pretty well-armed cruiser, for her size and tonnage.

How far they were followed by the boat from the La Blanche place they had no means of knowing, but at the end of a couple of miles their speed was slackened. From this point onward haste was of less value than caution, and the Seminole insisted upon changing places with Black Sam. The latter readily yielded his place at the prow, for he had more confidence in the red man's eyes than in his own, or any other man's.

There were clouds in the sky, and it would not have been easy to find a gloomier ribbon of dark water than was now the bayou that was winding along so sluggishly between its borders of reeds and forest.

"Ugh! Heap light! 'Top!" came sharply from Red Shirt Joe, and the canoe was halted.

At their right, almost invisible until reached, was one of the innumerable side openings which characterize some of the ribs of the water-skeleton called the Delta. Without a moment's delay, Black Sam steered the canoe in, as the Seminole whispered:—

“Quick, Sam! Heap quick,” at the same time picking up his rifle.

In an instant they were completely hidden, and in another a sharp-nosed rowboat went by at speed.

“Kill them!” shouted an excited voice in French. “We saw Jackson's officer last night. The others were only left at Grand Terre for spies on us.”

“Cut their throats,” yelled another. “We shall meet them before long. They can't escape from us.”

Four men only were in that boat, and they seemed to have a definite purpose of their own. They were rowing vigorously, as half-tipsy desperadoes might, when on their way to a bloody revenge of any kind.

Out into the bayou, at that moment, shot the canoe, to the great surprise of Dan. It

went as if of its own volition, but Black Sam had heard words which Dan did not understand. He knew more the next moment. Hardly were the rushes cleared, before the Seminole's rifle cracked and a loud yell from the Baratarian boat answered the report. Before Dan could make up his mind whether or not to fire, Black Sam had imitated the Seminole. It had been at very short range, or even such experts might have fired in vain; but four men, sitting close together, make a fairly wide mark, and both bullets seemed to hit. Whether the hit men were killed or only wounded it was no time to inquire, and the canoe sped on, followed by a couple of random shots, but not by any buccaneer boat.

"I reckon we're safe," shouted Dan. "Now for New Orleans. Lafitte told me we wouldn't meet any custom-house boats among the bayous. They stick to the main river."

"Dey'd nebber trouble us, nohow," said Sam. "We isn't pirates. We's Gin'ral Jackson's men."

He said it with manifest pride and satisfaction, and it looked as if Dan had really needed to be put in mind that all the custom-house officers were on the same side with himself.

"Anyhow," he remarked, "I wish I knew what Jean Lafitte's doing,—and those British officers and their ship."

"I reckon dey isn't doin' nothin' sah, at dis time o' night," responded Sam.

Something important was doing, in spite of Black Sam's opinion to the contrary. Away back, in a closed room of his house on Grand Terre, sat Jean Lafitte, and the lamp-light on his gloomy face brought out every shadow of its frequently changing expression. A cocked pistol lay by the lamp, and a bare cutlass, as if he was not feeling altogether secure from intrusion. A pen was in his hand, for he was carefully studying the terms of a letter which he proposed sending to Captain Lockyer in the morning. It was a remarkable literary production. It was preserved, in original and in copy, and it may now be read in the published records of

those eccentric negotiations. It asked the kindly consideration of the British commander for the difficulties under which the writer was laboring from the insubordination of a very few of his followers whom he would now speedily get rid of. Therefore a delay was requested, but only of a fortnight, that the Lafittes might prepare for a full compliance with the terms of alliance offered them. At the end of that time they would be ready; and the subtle Jean even named the spot, at the eastern end of the channel, where at that day he would be glad to meet a man in whom he had such implicit confidence as he had in Captain Lockyer. Whether the author of this letter had been brought up in a blacksmith shop, or whether, as is more likely, he had obtained a good education in the counting-room of some French commercial house doing business with smugglers and the like, he was a born diplomatist of no mean ability.

Morning came, the 4th of September, and a boat went to the *Sophia*, carrying the thoughtfully manufactured epistle of the buccaneer merchant of Grand Terre. It

was received, it was considered, and Captain Lockyer promptly replied. He agreed to the arrangement proposed, and promised to return at the end of fifteen days. He might well have done so, for not only would he thereby have secured the services of useful ships and men, but a strong British post would have been obtained, and nobody knew exactly how much trouble it might afterward give to the American army. There would surely have been batteries planted to command Barataria Bay as well as the seaward beach and channel, while all the bayou system, to the near neighborhood of New Orleans, above and below the city, would have been open to British expeditions, guided by men who knew every square mile of the Mississippi Delta. After all, the price offered for such a victory does not seem too large; but General Jackson had provided, beforehand, that his antagonists should not be compelled to pay for Barataria.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ARMY AT MOBILE

“**D**AN MARTIN, you and your men must get ready to go with me to Mobile. The general is there. I must deliver those despatches without any delay.”

“General Jackson? Mobile?” stammered Dan. “How did he get his army there as soon as this, sir?”

“He didn’t!” exclaimed Hutton, fiercely. “The old hero had to dash down across country almost alone, they tell me. I hope he got there in time to save the fort. He *is* the army.”

“Are we to go on horseback?” asked Dan.

“We shall have good horses,” replied Hutton. “We will ride hard, if we kill them all. I have sent Pat Shannon back with letters to Jean Lafitte. I say, how did you get your canoe over into the Mississippi?”

“Why,” said Dan, coloring, “we came to

a place where it's only a couple of miles across, and Sam and Joe went and hired some field hands and a wagon. Lafitte had given each of 'em fifty dollars, and I didn't know it. He offered me five hundred, but I wouldn't take it."

"Of course not," laughed Captain Hutton. "You're your father's own son. I'll have the canoe taken care of. We may need it again, after we get back from Mobile. Patterson's expedition will have done its work by that time."

The parcel which Dan had brought to Captain Hutton the previous day, for this was the 6th of September, had contained very interesting documents.

One was a letter to Governor Claiborne, giving Jean Lafitte's view of his side of the situation. One was to Captain Hutton, the contents of which were known only to that faithful aide-de-camp of General Jackson. Another letter was addressed to M. Blanqui, a member of the state legislature of Louisiana. Besides these, the packet contained all the documents brought to Lafitte by Captain Lockyer.

The entire matter, including Lafitte's almost eloquent declarations of patriotism and offers of service, was at once brought before a mixed gathering at the governor's house, made up of army and navy officers and distinguished civilians. At this council there was a division of opinion. The civilians, or many of them, were disposed to regard the British papers as inventions and Lafitte's conduct a mere subterfuge. The governor and the fighting men took the opposite view, but the only possible decision was that there should be no delay in Commodore Patterson's expedition to destroy Barataria.

With this, of course, Captain Hutton had nothing to do, and before noon of that day he was beyond the city limits, feverishly anxious to reach Mobile and make his various reports to General Jackson. There would be enough of them if he could get there, but he was travelling with a slender escort, considering the length of his journey and the strong probability that the road might be infested by small parties of hostile red men, the remnants of the Creek nation.

“Dan!” suddenly exclaimed Captain Hutton, as they drew rein at a brookside to refresh and rest their horses, “this is awful! I never before, in all my life, felt just as I do now.”

“Is there anything the matter?” asked Dan, anxiously.

“Matter?” replied the captain. “Why, here we are in the woods, and we don’t know anything. — That is, I know one thing, if the British should make a sudden dash into New Orleans, there isn’t any force there strong enough to keep them from taking the city and holding it. It isn’t safe, for a day, until Jackson gets there. I learned about Mobile, too. Fort Bowyer, all that protects the harbor, is half in ruins and has no garrison. Empty as an old eggshell. All the news from the North is that the volunteers are coming in slowly. Not even arms and ammunition for such as do come. The British could seize Grand Terre, to-day, if they only knew it, and had any real dash in them. It’s the worst state of affairs! The whole coast and every Southern seaport is at

the mercy of General Pakenham's fleet and army."

So it was, but Hutton was right in saying that he knew nothing about it, for the great fleet and army were slowly, grandly, imposingly getting together at their appointed rendezvous in Negril Bay, Jamaica, and the American army, otherwise known as Andrew Jackson, had reached the coast.

Several days later, a boat with six rowers might have been seen coming across Mobile Bay from the "point" on which Fort Bowyer had been built, that its guns, with any force to handle them, might command the narrow channel from the Gulf. On the wharf at which the boat seemed to be aimed stood a party of four, and behind them, at a little distance, as many horses seemed to have been left to care for themselves. Travel-stained, grimy, weary-looking were they all, for even the Seminole warrior had lost his dandy look, and Black Sam's unhandsome face had no laugh in it. Dan Martin actually sat down, muttering dolefully:—

"They haven't taken the fort yet, but there

isn't any army here. What on earth can General Jackson do?"

Captain Hutton's boots and uniform testified that he had been where there was much mud but no brush, and his face was dark with anxiety.

"Here he comes!" he exclaimed. "Thank God, he did get here!"

The boat touched the shore, but the one man in it who got out seemed to move with some difficulty.

"He is sick," muttered Dan, but at that moment a clear, ringing, altogether cheerful voice called out:—

"How are you, Captain Hutton? The very man I wanted to see! Let me have your report and despatches, but I want you to go and inspect Fort Bowyer. You know something of engineering —"

Hopeful, courageous, unflinching, was the bright face of the commander-in-chief, and he even stepped quickly as he came forward to greet his messengers.

"My report, first, if you please, general?" said Captain Hutton.

"Of course," said the general. "How are you, Dan Martin? Ki-a-wok? Sam? You've had a hard ride. I thank you all very much."

The red man's face brightened as the general shook hands with him. Black Sam laughed aloud, and Dan Martin half forgot how tired he was.

"How!" said the Seminole. "Glad see great chief. Heap fight pretty soon. Kill a heap. Go eat now."

"That's so," said the general. "Hutton, they must have their rations. So must you and I. Give me your report while you eat your dinner. But you mustn't delay getting to Fort Bowyer. I want to know what you think of the bearings and ranges of those guns. Come along."

There were others hurrying toward him now, and Dan and his friends were led away by a small mob that was wildly eager for the news from New Orleans.

Dan half wished that he could have been with Captain Hutton and the general, for he was sure that their talk would be tremen-

dously interesting, but somehow or other he felt less despair concerning the fate of Mobile and Fort Bowyer.

Probably all of the conversation at headquarters was as entertaining as Dan imagined that it would be, but there was one remark made by the general that he might not have perfectly understood.

"Patterson is the very man to make thorough work of the pirate's den," he said.

"He is right about it. His expedition will make sure that Jean Lafitte will keep his bargain with me. He will not be able to do anything else."

"General," said Captain Hutton, "as for the Baratavia batteries, put on a few more guns and we could hold Grand Terre against the British fleet. The pirates have made it a strong position."

"They won't waste much of their force there," said the general. "What I hope for is that they will linger along at Pensacola and Mobile,—or anywhere else, till I am ready for them. If they will but give me time! If they will but delay! Great heav-

ens, I need time! If they push on now, nothing I can do can save New Orleans."

He spoke with deep feeling, but even his clear perceptions of the desperate nature of his undertaking seemed to fill him with energy. Danger, disaster, appeared to actually endow him with a power beyond that of other men. Whatever may have been his defects of education or otherwise, he was a complete embodiment of much of the meaning that there is in the abused term, "hero."

Captain Hutton gazed at him for a moment, his face glowing with admiration, but the only words he could think of were:—

"General, if you please, I'll go over to Fort Bowyer, right away."

"Go!" said the general. "Take your squad with you and leave them there. Every man or boy is needed. Why, Hutton, we haven't, actually, men enough to handle the guns! Stay there to-night, and come to see me to-morrow. I'm raising troops. I shall have as many as a hundred more to send them, perhaps, pretty soon."

There may have been a touch of sarcasm

in that assertion, but out went Hutton, and in a few minutes more he was remarking:—

“Come along, Dan; I’m ashamed to say anything about fatigue and all that, now I’ve understood what the general’s been doing. He has transformed an empty ruin into a fort fit to beat off British war-ships.”

“I want to be in it when they come!” shouted Dan, and the Seminole must also have understood, for his hand went to his mouth and he uttered a shrill war-whoop, — as a steam engine might sound its whistle, to prove that steam was up.

CHAPTER XIV

FORT BOWYER

A SAIL-BOAT and a fair wind took Captain Hutton and his party across Mobile Bay, and it required all the excitement of the situation to keep Dan from going to sleep halfway over. He kept his eyes open, however, trying all the while, also, to get a clearer idea of what it was that made Fort Bowyer of so much importance.

“Why?” said the captain, in reply to one of his questions. “Well, just now, it’s because, if British ships could get in here and land five hundred marines or Indians, it’ll be two weeks before the general ’ll have as many riflemen to whip them away with.”

Some time was consumed in necessary tacking, to and fro. It was night before the sail-boat reached the point; and her passengers walked into Fort Bowyer by the dim

light of a couple of lanterns held by members of the ununiformed garrison.

"Captain Hutton," shouted a deep, cheery voice, as they entered, "I'm glad you've come. We shall hold the fort. Hurrah for General Jackson!"

"Major Lawrence!" responded Hutton. "Is that you, my old friend? The general told me you were here. He knows what man to put in a tight place."

"Not so very tight," said the major. "I'll show you all over it in the morning. Come to my quarters. Your men will be shown to theirs. Neither they nor you can see anything to-night."

So it came to pass that Dan Martin's next war experience, after he had eaten a supper of fish from the bay, was only a ragged horse blanket thrown on the ground for him to sleep on, near one of the fort embrasures. His eyelids came together while he was staring at a huge cannon that was looking out of the embrasure as if it were silently watching for possible British war-ships on the tossing waves of the Gulf of Mexico.

They were there, and more were coming, and this was a night of watchfulness for all who were awake at Fort Bowyer.

A young soldier with a twenty-four-pounder cannon for a room-mate, in the first fortress he had ever entered, was likely to be an early riser, and Dan Martin was up and peering over the ramparts before the sun of the 12th of September was above the horizon.

"There isn't anything great to be seen," he was thinking. "There's the channel that the British want to sail through, into the bay. There are the big sand-hills. Captain Hutton told me the general wanted him to survey them. He believes that, if the British could mount cannon on one of them, they could throw their shot right into the fort. There's no cellar here deep enough to hide our ammunition in, and there are cart-loads of it. Glad of that, if there's a fight coming."

What he meant was that this was a very imperfect fort, without what is called a "covered way," in front, or any "bombproof" powder magazine, or hospital for wounded men.

He knew very little about such matters, and he turned admiringly for a look at the great guns, as he considered them.

"I know," he said. "The captain told me. Two of them are twenty-fours. Six of them are twelve-pounders. There are a dozen smaller guns, of all sorts. One hundred and sixty men. That's eight for each gun. I reckon we can load and fire 'em."

Military men would have wished for something more than mere gun-crews for their artillery, considering how many things there are to do in a fort under a heavy fire, but Dan was a greenhorn.

"Ugh!" growled a deep voice in his ear, and he was startled at the same moment by a strong grip on his shoulder. "Boy up. Ki-a-wok see Major Lawrence. Go!"

"Red Shirt Joe!" he exclaimed. "Have you been scouting already?"

"Ugh! Boy no talk. Shut mouth."

"There comes the major," interrupted Dan; for he saw the first commander striding rapidly toward them.

A summons had reached him, brought in

by a patrol on a run, and here he was to question the Seminole.

“What is it?” he curtly demanded.

“Ugh!” almost whooped the Seminole, holding up at the same moment a bloody proof that he had made a successful war-path. “Ki-a-wok great chief! Take ‘calp. Heap Creek come ashore in night. Heap redcoat. One cannon. Many boat. ‘Tay over behind sand-hill. Fort wake up.”

“Just what I expected,” said Major Lawrence, calmly. “They are coming, but there are no ships very near.”

He questioned the Seminole closely, receiving very intelligent answers; but other scouts were out, and he would soon know more. Ki-a-wok was in high spirits, for he had at last succeeded in actually striking an enemy. Dan had an idea that Black Sam looked at his red comrade with envious eyes, as a rival who was getting ahead of him.

Captain Hutton and some of the officers of the garrison were busy at their professional duties, and part of these consisted in

a vigorous drilling of the newly enlisted volunteers in handling the guns. Dan Martin himself was entered with a squad that was to have charge of his first great acquaintance, the twenty-four.

"So!" he exclaimed. "I'm to be an artilleryman. What would father say to that? or Jim? or mother?"

Dan had hardly selected the right name this time. He was not expected to load or aim or fire that imposing piece of ordnance. He was to be what the sailors call a powder monkey, carrying cartridges. He was also provided with a handbarrow for shot, and he found that even the toting of powder and ball required special instruction.

The scouts came and went, confirming the Seminole's observations; but there was as yet nothing ready to report to the general, and the day went slowly by.

Something apparently did come, at a couple of hours before sunset, for no less than four British men-of-war were then in sight. They furled their sails and dropped their anchors, about six miles from Mobile Point,

as if they had come to stay there for a while.

It was a strong squadron. The *Hermes*, Captain Percy, carried twenty-two guns; the *Sophia*, Captain Lockyer, eighteen guns; the *Caron*, twenty guns; the *Childers*, eighteen guns. That is, Captain Percy, in command, had seventy-eight guns,—so that he could fire broadsides of thirty-nine each, or, at every fire, twice as many as were in Fort Bowyer. As many of the fort guns were small, and some of the naval guns were very heavy, the advantage of the British was tremendous. Their cannon power was nearly five times that of the fort, if they could get near enough to use it. Dan heard all about it, that evening, and he was disposed to admire, more than ever, what to his eyes appeared to be the thickness and strength of those really very imperfect ramparts.

Ships lying at anchor, at a distance, can do no harm, but early the next day the British force on land was seen to be moving forward. British authorities record the force which first landed at sixty marines and a

hundred and twenty Creeks. These must afterward have been reënforced, for another statement increases the number to one hundred and thirty marines and six hundred Indians. The smaller force would not have dared to advance, as these did now, after reconnoitring. They took possession of a sand-hill, seven hundred yards away, and opened fire with their one gun, a howitzer.

Dan Martin stood at his gun and watched the firing.

"There!" he exclaimed, "they hit that log!"

"Kill 'im dead, Massa Dan," laughed Black Sam, at his side. "Dat ar' log isn't good for nothin' any moah."

The heavy pine timber that had formed part of a parapet had been splintered in a way to show Dan what a cannon-ball could do, but that was all, except that the attack on the fort had actually begun. The American guns replied, but there was, as yet, very little for them to do; and Dan wondered at the sudden excitement that came upon Captain Hutton and Major Lawrence.

"Telescopes?" he thought. "I can't see anything. What's coming? There's the major himself, sighting one of those nine-pounders. There it goes!"

He had no spy-glass, or he might have discovered, as his commander did, that several boats from the enemy had boldly pulled on into the channel, to take soundings for the benefit of the ships which were to follow them. The brave tars did their work and then got away, seemingly unharmed by the cannonade before which they were forced to retreat.

No battle had come yet, but there was excitement enough, even after dark, for everybody in the fort knew that the British marines under Colonel Nichols and the Creeks under Captain Woodbine were steadily coming closer, making breastworks here and there to protect them from the American artillery. All were astir early on the morning of September 14, but Dan Martin was awakened by Captain Hutton.

"Do you want me, sir?" exclaimed Dan, springing to his feet.

"No," said the captain, curtly. "You are to stay here, unless Major Lawrence wishes to send a message by you. I am off to report to General Jackson that the British will attack us within twenty-four hours. Their ships are moving. We must have more men, if he can send us only a dozen. The outlook for this fort is a bad one."

"We'll fight," said Dan.

"Of course you will," growled the captain. "I want to stay, but I can't. I'll try to come back with a reënforcement. If those Creeks get over the rampart, they won't leave a living soul in Fort Bowyer. It'll be another affair like that at Fort Mimms."

"They killed 'em all," said Dan. "'Tisn't so far away from this place, either. So Tecumseh's and Proctor's Indians did, after our defeat at the Raisin."

Away went Captain Hutton, and he was soon in a boat, speeding across Mobile Bay to warn General Jackson of the awful peril so close at hand. Precisely how he succeeded was not known at the fort until three days later. The captain's boat had gone

only a few miles when it met another, for the general himself was on his way to inspect the situation of affairs. Silently, with a clouded face, he listened to every particular of Captain Hutton's report.

"Major Lawrence is right!" he said. "They will attack him. I do not need to know any more. Hutton, come back to Mobile with me. He must have men! God in heaven! where can I get them? He and his brave fellows will be massacred."

His rowers pulled their best, Hutton's own boat returning to the fort without him. Mobile was reached, and General Jackson searched for men, but he could at that hour muster only eighty that were fit to send. He placed them under a good officer, and hurried them off; but he had not barges enough, and so he sent them on a sailing vessel. That was the end of their usefulness as a reënforcement, for the wind turned against them and they never reached Fort Bowyer.

One more night went by, and the 15th of September came; and Dan Martin felt that

he was rapidly becoming an old soldier, belonging to a garrison which had been besieged during several very trying days.

"I suppose," he thought, "the captain and his reënforcements will get here to-day. Perhaps General Jackson 'll come too. Some of the Creeks scouted near enough in the night for us to hear 'em whoop. I hope we can kill some of them. All the men are talking about them, just as Captain Hutton did. We won't surrender, just to be scalped, after we've given up our rifles and can't help ourselves."

That was the feeling throughout the garrison, but perhaps only the officers saw how almost hopeless was to be a defence against such overwhelming odds.

The hours went by; the ships tacked to and fro as if waiting for a favorable wind to carry them into the channel; and at last, at about two o'clock, it could be seen that their holding back was over.

More experienced eyes than Dan Martin's were studying the movements of the enemy, but he could feel his heart beating like a

small trip-hammer, as he listened to the fierce exclamations uttered by the all but desperate men around him.

“Men!” he heard in a trumpet-like voice from near the centre of the open space within the fort.

There stood Major Lawrence on an empty box, and the garrison came swarming around him. Every gun was deserted, and the brave fellows who were so soon to fight for their lives gazed intently upon the resolute face of their commander as he vigorously addressed them. The officers were nearest, and a part of his speech was directly to them, for no one could tell how soon one of them might be commanding in his place.

“Our motto this day,” he said, “is that of Captain Lawrence on the shattered *Chesapeake*: *Don't give up the ship!* I now have a resolution to propose for adoption, and you must swear to abide by it.”

He read it aloud. It was an agreement that the fort should be held to the last extremity,—until it should be battered to a ruin and most of its defenders killed. Even

then there was to be no surrender, except upon honorable terms and full security against massacre by the Indians.

The officers took the oath, man by man, and the men agreed to stand by them.

“Now!” shouted the major. “Every man to his post, and don’t give up the ship!”

Dan felt himself tingling all over, and he gripped his rifle hard.

“Oh!” he said, “but don’t I hope I’ll have a chance to use it before this fight’s over!”

It was four o’clock before the cannonading really began, and then Dan was better able to understand General Jackson’s anxiety about the ranges and bearings of the cannon of the fort. Only twelve of them were in position for use, against the seventy-eight of the ships of war,—if these could all be brought to bear.

Thirty minutes later the *Hermes* was in the channel, followed by her consorts, and they all dropped anchor with one full broadside toward Fort Bowyer.

The firing became terrific, and Dan found

himself toiling back and forth through a dense fog of powder smoke, wheeling supplies of balls and cartridges for his twenty-four-pounder. Black Sam was performing similar service for another gun, but the Seminole would do no such work. He sat in silence at an empty embrasure, watching with wooden calmness the operations of the ships and the nearer movements of the marines and Creeks. These latter had as yet not distinguished themselves, for it had been easy to silence Colonel Nichols's solitary howitzer.

An hour went by, and suddenly, by order of Major Lawrence, the fort fire ceased.

"He hasn't surrendered!" sprang to the lips of Dan Martin.

"No, my boy," said a tall volunteer near him, "the flag o' the *Hermes* is shot down. There! It's up again! I was sure she hadn't lowered it for any harm we've done her yet. Hurrah! Blaze away!"

There had been a silent interval of several minutes, during which every gun on either side was loaded. Then it seemed to Dan

as if they all went off together, shaking Mobile Point and all the surrounding country.

"There goes our flag this time," yelled Dan, as the fort flagstaff was cut in two by a cannon-ball.

"Massa Dan!" called out Black Sam. "Come on! We's boun' to put it up! Fetch dat ar' rammer!"

Half a dozen others sprang away with them, and in a few minutes more the Stars and Stripes arose as brightly as ever, the splintered staff having been spliced with the long sponger stick brought by Dan Martin from a disabled gun.

The British ships increased their fire at that moment, and the force under Colonel Nichols may have misunderstood the situation. Creeks and marines, yelling, whooping, hurrahing, with one accord they sprang forward as if expecting to take possession of the fort. If they could have done so, the red men would not have waited to be restrained by any formal terms of surrender.

"Grape shot for them!" shouted Major

Lawrence, and the men loaded as if their last moment had come.

The batteries thundered again, the showers of lead and iron fell among the advancing stormers, and this was not at all what the warriors of the woods had been expecting. The marines were too few to come on alone, and when their savage allies broke and ran, they were compelled to do the same, — and were entirely willing under the circumstances.

These all had fallen back, but it seemed as if the dark hour of the fort and its garrison had come. Major Lawrence walked slowly along from place to place inspecting the serious damage done to the ramparts, and brave as he was, he shook his head half despondingly. Dan Martin stood still and stared in astonishment, as he wheeled a barrow load of balls to the side of his twenty-four.

“They’ll not be needed, my boy,” said his friend, the gunner. “She’ll never throw another shot. She’s half busted.”

So was the other twenty-four-pounder. One of the smaller guns had burst. One

had been shattered by a British ball. Two more were dismounted. The artillery force of the fort had been diminished by at least a third. The men themselves were weary, for the hot September weather was telling on them. Every tenth man was down, killed or wounded, and the stock of ammunition was getting lower all the while.

The gloom over the fort was as dark as the eddying clouds of powder smoke. It would soon have grown darker, but for the intelligence and patriotism unexpectedly displayed by a round globe of iron fired from one of the remaining twelve-pounder guns. Starting from the cannon muzzle in the usual manner, as if it intended striking the *Hermes*, it sailed on a few feet ahead of her, and cut the cable by which she was held at anchor. In an instant she was adrift, without a sail up to give her steerage way. The strong tide took hold of her prow, swung it around, and plunged it into the sandy bottom of a shallow. There she struck, her stern toward the fort, all her guns useless, and her entire length exposed to a raking fire, which

was pitilessly poured into her. She could neither fight nor get away, and Captain Percy was forced to abandon her. As rapidly as possible he transferred his crew, well men or wounded, to the *Sophia*. She had been somewhat injured, but was not crippled. The two other ships were almost unharmed, but all these pulled up their anchors and sailed away out of range. It was well for Major Lawrence and his brave garrison that the British commander was at that time ignorant of the disabled condition of Fort Bowyer, for his superiority in men and guns, in fighting strength, was much greater than at the outset. The actual British loss is officially reported at only thirty-two killed and forty wounded, sailors and marines, although this is not supposed to include Red Stick Creeks, not on the muster rolls of enlisted men.

The American artillery continued to send an occasional shot at the *Hermes*, but she was not to become a prize. A fire had been kindled in her hold, and before long it burned up through her hatches.

"Sorry for that!" exclaimed Dan Martin, as he looked at the swift flame, climbing her masts and rigging. "Oh! but wouldn't she have made a good ship for us to have!"

The forces under Colonel Nichols and Captain Woodbine had retired, and scouts from the fort were out to find what had become of them. Perhaps the first man to go over the ramparts on that errand had been Red Shirt Joe, followed closely by Black Sam. They did not return for several hours, and when they came in to make their report, such as it was, they found Major Lawrence in the centre of a small group of officers and men, among whom was Dan Martin.

"Hold on, Sam," whispered Dan. "Hear what that lieutenant is saying."

"How many?" asked the major, with some surprise. "How many cannon-balls did you say we had fired away at 'em?"

"Seven hundred, sir," said the officer; but at that moment all other sounds were drowned in the roar of a tremendous explosion, while

a vast column of smoke and flame shot up from a spot out in the channel.

"Yes, sir," added the lieutenant, "and the *Hermes* is blown up, sir. The fire got to her powder magazine —"

"That's the last of her!" shouted the major. "Three cheers, men! Now!"

Every other voice joined heartily with his own, and as they ceased, he exclaimed:—

"General Jackson must know this. The reports are all ready to send him. Sergeant, get a boat ready. Are you there, Martin? I can spare no enlisted men. The wind is fine, now, and you and your Seminole and Sam must take a sail across the bay."

"All ready, sir!" responded Dan, and his Indian friend added:—

"Ugh! Ki-a-wok ready too. All Creek go into boat and get away. No kill any more now. Chief heard heap big gun."

Beyond a doubt it had been a delightful episode in his warrior life to have heard so many cannon roaring together. It had been a wonderful thing for Dan Martin also, but he felt a thrill of pride in being made Major

Lawrence's especial messenger to General Jackson. Perhaps he would not have been so, but for the fact that Major Lawrence half expected another attack, and had only a hundred and forty men at all fit for duty.

The general had already received a messenger, however; for the brig containing the eighty men intended to reënforce the garrison had sailed back swiftly across the bay, the wind now being with her. All on board had seen the red light from the burning *Hermes*. All had heard, at eleven o'clock, the thunder from her bursting magazine. It had been interpreted by them as the glare of the burning timbers of the captured fort, and the explosion of all its remaining powder. So they reported in the morning when the brig reached Mobile. The general almost refused to believe, but he began at once to plan measures and summon troops for re-occupying the Point. It must have been a dark hour for him, in spite of his unflinching courage and exhaustless energy. It was only two or three dark hours, however, for the next sail to come down on the wind to Mo-

bile brought to him Dan Martin and the triumphant despatches of Major Lawrence.

“No!” he exclaimed, after he had read them and listened to Dan’s account. “They will not try it again right away. They’ve had enough. Captain Hutton, this news ought to be in New Orleans within forty-eight hours.”

“One hundred and seventy miles, by such roads? The horses — ”

“Horses!” exclaimed the general. “No! The coast will be almost clear for a day or so. You and your men and a couple of sailors can make the run, going in through Lake Borgne. Less risk just now than there would have been before this victory.”

“We can do it, general!” replied Captain Hutton; and he went away to find and prepare a swift despatch-boat, while the general went to his quarters to ply his pen all the rest of the day upon reports of several kinds, and upon spirit-stirring proclamations to the people.

CHAPTER XV

BATTLE FEVER DAYS

"CAPTAIN!" shouted Dan, "they've tacked again! Are we going to get away from them?"

"Of course we are," said Captain Hutton, coolly. "They'll send more shot after us, but they won't venture to follow us across the Lake Borgne shoals."

"We'll run 'em fast aground if they do," said a sailor-like man at the helm of the tight little craft they were in. "But that there brig's a clipper. We've had a close shave."

"A miss is as good as a mile," said Hutton; and he may have meant the British brig which had pursued them so persistently during the latter part of this daring run from Mobile, or he may have referred to a shot from one of her guns which was at that moment skipping from wave to wave less than twenty yards from the sail-boat.

The navigation at the entrance of Lake Borgne was understood to be somewhat uncertain for heavy-draft vessels, and the British brig was indeed giving up the chase. A mere despatch-boat, if such she might be considered, was hardly worth the risk. The *Hermes* herself had been lost by running her nose into American mud.

“Where away now, Captain Hutton?” called out the sailor. “We’re safe.”

“Straight for the mouth of Bayou St. John,” replied Hutton. “We can foot it from there into New Orleans. ’Tisn’t over seven miles.”

The breeze was good, and the boat went along finely, while Captain Hutton seemed to be not contented with using his eyes, for he was working a spy-glass also.

“Do you see anything, sir?” asked Dan.

“No, not yet,” said the captain; “but Commodore Patterson believes that the British will try to get in at us by way of this lake. He means to have an armed fleet of barges here, and how he’s to arm them I don’t know. General Jackson’ll have to help him about that.”

"Could they take the old fort at the Bayou St. John?" asked the sailor.

"They won't need to," said the captain. "It won't be in their way. Pretty good fort too. The Spaniards built it of bricks that they brought all the way from Spain. I heard that it's garrisoned now, by a corporal and three men. That's enough to keep the old guns clean, so they can be loaded and fired if they're wanted."

There was nothing in his present orders, however, which required him to inspect the old Spanish fort, and he saw no sign of any American flotilla cruising on the lake. Nothing was there to have prevented a fleet of British boats from pulling right in and landing where he did, under the empty brass cannon the Spaniards had left behind them.

"Captain," said the sailor, "we'll go ashore, and get some rations for the return trip. Then we're off for Mobile."

"Ugh!" exclaimed the Seminole. "Ki-awok go too. No fight at New Orleans till Jackson come. No 'tay. Want fight."

"Good!" said Captain Hutton. "No,

Smith, you won't go till to-morrow morning. I'll send some despatches back by you and Black Sam and the Seminole. I shan't need them here."

"Ugh!" said Ki-a-wok. "Jackson go fight Red Stick Creek again. Kill a heap. No want go sleep in town."

He and Sam were not enlisted men, and they would be of more value at Mobile than elsewhere. It was best to let them have their own way, for the negro was in very positive agreement with the scalp-hungry red man.

The walk from their landing-place to the city might have been a quiet one, if they had not met anybody on the way, and if Captain Hutton had not stopped the first wayfarer they came to and asked for the latest news. Of course it was received in exchange for the glorious tidings of the victory at Fort Bowyer. In a moment that man was dancing up and down with patriotic delight. In another, they had heard of something which Commodore Patterson had been doing, and then they were pushing forward at their best pace,

followed and joined by eager, exulting inquirers, until they reached the city more as a kind of fast-growing mob than as a mere squad of messengers from General Jackson.

There had been some excitement in New Orleans before they came in this way, to almost set the city on fire.

"Barataria wiped out?" Captain Hutton had exclaimed. "Dan, that's one more blow at the British. Jean Lafitte 'll have to keep his word now."

"Oh! But won't he be mad?" said Dan.

"Not very," replied the captain. "I don't believe his own pocket suffered much, and he knew, long ago, that he must shut up shop."

The Grand Terre establishment was gone, forever, nevertheless. On the 10th of September, Pierre Lafitte, the eldest of the three brothers, returned to Grand Terre from some business expedition or other, and he at once fully approved of all the action taken by Jean in his absence. No doubt he also joined him, with energy, in the work of removing goods out of reach of the coming

expedition. The force under Commodore Patterson left New Orleans on the 11th, and was four days on its way, every step of its progress watched by the Baratarians. On the 15th, the day of the fight at Fort Bowyer, it reached and captured Grand Terre. There was no resistance. Some booty was found in the warehouses. A few vessels of no great value were caught in the bay. The buildings were destroyed, and a small guard was left to care for the cannon in the seaward battery. A number of prisoners were taken and carried to New Orleans, but among them was not either Jean Lafitte or his brother Pierre. If they were not at La Blanche's place, they had gone to some equally secure refuge.

The story of the fall of Barataria did not end here, however. There was something almost comic in the fact that Captain Lockyer kept his word to Jean Lafitte. Punctually, on the 20th of September, the *Sophia* appeared off the mouth of the channel and fired her signals. She was not so badly crippled by Major Lawrence's guns that she

could not make so short a voyage as this. In vain her expectant cannon sounded. No pirate-merchant boat came out to meet her and deliver the various properties agreed upon. The thirty thousand dollars and all the bribes were saved to the British government. Captain Lockyer had been taught prudence recently, however. All this might be only a cunning Yankee trap set for him, after all, and he did not try to run into the bay with the *Sophia*. He gave it up and sailed away, and he may have at that hour lost all his confidence in buccaneers and their promises.

Captain Hutton succeeded in reaching Governor Claiborne's house through a dense throng which packed the street in front of it, but he could not answer a hundred anxious questioners who shouted:—

“When is General Jackson coming?”

That was a thing which no living man could tell, for the general had yet much business to attend to, at Mobile, Pensacola, and elsewhere. He was now well informed, also, that the great British expedition, fleet and

army, had not by any means completed the slow and dignified process of pulling itself together.

“I shall have time,” he said. “I will finish here first. Then I shall get to New Orleans before they can. I’ll beat ’em.”

Dan Martin was not expected to follow the captain into the governor’s parlor, already crowded with much more important people. Black Sam and the Seminole had wisely disappeared, for they were not talking men, and any report they might have to make could be given out in ways that suited themselves. Dan, therefore, had almost to himself the trying duty of telling, over and over again, how the British attacked Fort Bowyer, and how they were defeated. All who heard were glad to get the particulars from a fellow who had actually been in the fort, and who had handled a twenty-four-pounder cannon during the battle. It was the next best thing to having been there all the while themselves.

Dan enjoyed it, no doubt, but when at last the captain came out and hailed him, he

hurried into the house as if he were running away from something.

"Captain," he whispered. "Can anybody hear us? I want to tell something."

"This way," said the captain, pulling him along. "Now! What is it?"

"Pat Shannon," said Dan. "He got at me in the crowd, for a moment. Jean Lafitte is up the river. He wants to see you. I'm to meet Pat on the levee, this evening."

"Call him Pierre Chanon, all the while," said the captain. "There's a reason for it. Go, by all means. Learn all you can. I shan't meet you again till to-morrow morning. Sleep at your old quarters. See if you have any letters in the post-office. I must go back to the governor now."

It was somewhat easier now to slip through a crowd, all the members of which were talking excitedly to one another, the greater part of them in French. Dan knew the whereabouts of the post-office, but going to such a place with the idea of getting anything was altogether a new experience. His blood tingled as if he were marching against the

British, and his brains began to crowd up, tumultuously, with thoughts and memories of his far-away home in Tennessee.

“Will there be one there? From mother? From father? The girls can write first-rate, but Jim can’t. I hope it’s there.”

In a few minutes more he knew, for the first letter he had ever received was in his hand. He looked at it, weighed it, studied the post-marks, but he could not bear to open it on the street. The postage had been twenty-five cents, for the days of stamps of one value for any distance in the United States had not yet come.

“It’s a heavy letter,” he thought. “I’ll read it in my room, — all alone.”

He was not long in getting there, and then his fingers trembled as he carefully cut away the paper around the wafer that shut up that priceless letter.

Whom was it from? Indeed! Why, it was from the whole family, although his mother had written the greater part of it. Among them all, they had told him how the house and farm looked, and a lot of things which had hap-

pened while he was away in the army. The number of questions asked, especially by his father, concerning military affairs, was extraordinary. Of course there was a post-script, for down at the end of the last page his mother added:—

“Jim says, tell Dan the gray horse he stole on the road to Nashville got here all right, and I’m ploughing with him. I hope he’ll shoot some British and get back home as soon as he can.”

“That’s Jim!” said Dan, and then, for the first time, he knew that he had been wiping something wet from both his cheeks while he was reading that letter.

It was done now, and he could go and eat his supper. After that, there was nothing to be thought of but his expected meeting with Pierre Chanon.

“Pat’ll be there,” said Dan to himself. “I don’t know who else may be. I’d better take Sam and the Seminole along.”

Both of them had come to see him, but it appeared as if they had done so mainly to make sure of their intended escape from New Orleans to rejoin General Jackson.

They were willing enough to go with Dan, although he did not promise them an opportunity for killing anybody.

“Ugh!” said Ki-a-wok. “No kill Chanon. Heap friend. No want Chanon ‘calp.”

He was evidently in a disgusted state of mind at being entrapped here, so far away from the possible fights near the Florida border line, where the Creeks were known to be gathering to receive their new guns and other presents from England.

The river bank was reached and half a mile of it, up-stream, was traversed in watchful silence. The night was dark, but the eyes of Ki-a-wok were very good.

“Ugh!” he exclaimed. “Hold ‘till — Chanon.”

He pointed at something that seemed to be lying on the ground, not many feet beyond them, as if a man were there asleep.

Black Sam whistled shrilly, and the seeming sleeper arose to a sitting posture.

“Come!” said Ki-a-wok. “Talk now.”

“Pierre Chanon?” said Dan, in a low tone. “Is that you?”

"Don't spake Frinch, the day," replied Chanon. "All I've to say is this. Till Captain Hutton that Jean sends word: Jean'll kape faith wid the gineral. He's not far away. Till the captain we'll mate him for a talk,—himsilf to set the day and hour, and I'll coom to bring him to the place, if that'll suit him."

"Of course it will," said Dan. "The captain wants just such a talk. He has a good deal to say, too. I'll meet you here, to-morrow night."

"All right," said Chanon, lazily lying down again. "Get along wid yez, now."

He had not been seen to confer with anybody, if, perchance, there had been watchers; but Dan and his friends had not walked a hundred yards before Red Shirt Joe remarked:—

"Ki-a-wok saw Jean. Heap fool 'tay in New Orleans. Claiborne shut him in jail."

"I didn't see him," exclaimed Dan. "Where was he?"

"Heap big ole sugar barrel," said the Seminole. "Lift head. Ki-a-wok see."

It was even so. Jean Lafitte was in the city, and not even the watchful red warrior had seen Pierre Chanon hand to Dan Martin a paper envelope. Not until Dan reached Captain Hutton's quarters, moreover, did he learn by the light of a candle that this contained a letter addressed to Major General Andrew Jackson, and another for Hutton himself.

"This is very important, Dan," said the captain. "We must occupy Grand Terre as soon as possible. This other must go off to Mobile in the boat, with my other despatches. It will take me all night to write them."

CHAPTER XVI

THE BRITISH ARE CLOSING IN

“**B**AD news, Dan!” said Captain Hutton, as his boy orderly came to the piazza in front of General Jackson’s headquarters in New Orleans.

The captain’s face was darkly clouded, and Dan’s own turned pale as he responded:—

“What is it, sir? Has anything happened to General Jackson?”

“No, not so bad as that,” said the captain, gloomily; “but the British have destroyed our gunboats on Lake Borgne.”

“Captured the lake?” exclaimed Dan. “Then they can come right in.”

“Well,” said the captain, more courageously, “I suppose they can now make a landing somewhere, and march along until they find something in their way.”

“We’ll meet ’em,” said Dan. “I’m glad

so many Tennesseans are here already, — and more coming.”

“We shall need a great many more,” growled the captain; “but the general is doing wonders with all the force he has.”

It was the evening of the 14th of December, 1814. General Jackson had been in the city only twelve days, but during those days he had organized something like an army out of a great variety of previously discordant elements. The city was now under martial law, and many citizens complained that it was also under the outrageous tyranny of a merciless, self-willed dictator. At this hour, not only the grumblers, but thousands of patriotic men and women, were suffering under an undisguised panic, for dreadful prophecies had been uttered of the probable conduct, or misconduct, of the British troops, if they should take the city.

To many eyes it looked as if there was nothing to keep them from doing so, and the condition of affairs was really made much worse by their small but decisive victory at Lake Borgne.

"There are so many of them!" said Dan Martin, as he thought the matter over. "And there are so few of us! How can the general be so sure he is going to beat them?"

A fleet of fifty war-ships and transports, carrying a thousand guns and twenty thousand men, seemed, indeed, to be utterly overwhelming. So they would have been, if the ships could have sailed on to any place from which their thousand guns could have thrown shot into New Orleans. As to the twenty thousand men, only half of them were soldiers, although these might have been largely reënforced from the hard-fighting sailors, if there had been any use found for more men. The regular soldiers, of all sorts, ready to go on shore, were about five times as many as the Americans could send out to face them. This should have been enough. It might have been, perhaps, but for one thing. The commander-in-chief of the British forces at this time was General Uncertainty, for General Pakenham had not arrived, and his brave and capable subordinate, General Keane, was

waiting for him. A very different commander was infusing his own terrible energy into the hearts of the American army.

"Dan, my boy," exclaimed Captain Hutton, "I'm ashamed of myself. I ought not to feel as I do about this Lake Borgne affair,—not after the talk I've had with the general."

"Why, sir," said Dan, "what does he say about it?"

"He didn't quiver a hair!" replied the captain. "He was sorry, of course, that we lost our five gunboats. The British came on with a superior force and stormed over them when they were caught in a calm and couldn't manœuvre. 'But,' said the general, 'this gives me a great relief, after all.'"

"A relief?" said Dan, in astonishment.

"Yes," said the captain. "He said that now he knows from which of several possible directions the British are coming. He can concentrate his men and guns to meet 'em."

"Can't he keep 'em from landing?" asked Dan.

"No," said Hutton. "He can't guard so

long a line of shore. He doesn't want to, either. Wherever they land, they'll have a swampy march before 'em, and he'll be ready to strike 'em as soon as they show themselves within his reach."

Dan had learned a great deal during the long weeks of October and November which had passed after his arrival in New Orleans. Captain Hutton remained there, almost overwhelmed by the duties of all sorts which fell upon him as one of General Jackson's personal representatives, and Dan's errands were numberless. They took him to every point in or near the city which was of any military importance. He visited Fort St. Philip, down the river, and he went all over old Fort St. John. He saw every arrival of volunteers from the North, and he watched the gathering and drilling of the patriotic citizens of New Orleans. By direction of Captain Hutton, he was drilled regularly with one of the French Creole companies, — a good one, too; but as soon as General Coffee came with a strong body of Tennessee riflemen, Dan was mustered in with them

and ordered by his commander to special duty at headquarters. This was in accordance with army rules. He became a private soldier on General Coffee's muster roll, but it made no change whatever in his employment as Captain Hutton's orderly.

The captain had had more than one private conference with Jean Lafitte, but as yet the overturned ruler of Grand Terre and Barataria had not obtained an interview with General Jackson. Perhaps he did not wish one, for he and his brothers had much business of their own upon their hands, and property to care for.

Day after day went by. It was certain that the British must be preparing to strike a blow, and the city was all the while alive with exciting rumors. The work of getting ready to meet them went on with desperate energy. The expected reënforcements from the North had not arrived, but were known to be on their way and drawing very near.

It was at half-past one o'clock of the 23d of December, that Captain Hutton stood in front of the table at which General Jackson

was writing a letter of some sort. There were several other officers in the room, and Dan Martin stood at the door, waiting for orders. He heard General Coffee say in a low tone to a gentleman near him:—

“No, colonel. We are all at sea as to their next intentions, but it has taken them eight days, now, to find a landing-place — since they captured Lake Borgne.”

At that moment the door of the room flew open and the sentry on duty excitedly announced:—

“Men with news from the British.”

“Show them in,” interrupted General Jackson, throwing down his pen.

In they came, three of them, Colonel de la Ronde, Mr. Dussau de la Croix, and Major Gabriel Vilerè, all stained with mud and nearly out of breath, for they had ridden hard all the way from the Vilerè plantation.

“What news do you bring, gentlemen?” asked the general, calmly; but there was no calmness left in that room after their rapid replies were given.

The British army had landed and were

pushing forward. They had captured Major Vilerè at his own plantation, but with extraordinary courage and endurance he had escaped from them, to report that their advance was at this hour only nine miles from the city of New Orleans. They had at last made a dash, in force, and they had done it exceedingly well.

Dan Martin heard, but he was not looking at the brave men who had brought the news. He was not the only person present who could not take his eyes from the face of General Jackson.

"I wish father could see him now," he thought. "He used to tell me that sometimes the general seemed to be all on fire, inside. That's the way he looks."

Major Vilerè had just ceased speaking, and General Jackson stood erect.

"By the Eternal!" he said fiercely. "They shall not sleep on our soil!"

Then he turned and glanced rapidly from face to face of those around him.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the British are below. We must fight them *to-night!*"

From some other remark which followed, it appeared that, unknown to the public, he had not been altogether unprepared for this precise information. It had not taken him by surprise, and all necessary action could be taken with perfect coolness as well as rapidity. Messengers carried out orders in all directions, summoning all forces, and among those who went, half wild with excitement, was Dan Martin. Hardly had he left the headquarters, however, before he was arrested, so to speak, for a hand was on his shoulder.

“Ugh!” said a deep voice. “Fight come?”

“To-night!” shouted Dan. “We’ve to strike them as soon as we can get at them.”

“Dat’s it! Dat’s de talk!” yelled another voice behind him, and the Seminole broke out into a prolonged, bloodthirsty war-whoop.

“Massa Dan!” said Black Sam, “we’ll be wid ye. We’s gwine out wid Gin’ral Coffee an’ our folks from Tennessee.”

“I can’t stop,” said Dan.

“Don’ want ye to,” said Sam, and Ki-a-wok added: —

“Boy go! Whoop! Heap fight! Heap kill! Ole chief heart glad now.”

Away went Dan and when he returned from that errand, ready for another, he met Captain Hutton on the piazza.

“Has General Jackson gone to the front, sir?” he ventured to ask.

“The general? No,” said the captain. “He ate a little boiled rice. He’s too sick to eat anything else. He’s in there now, lying asleep on the sofa. Nobody must disturb him, for he didn’t go to bed last night.”

It was the last rest he was to take for seventy long hours of march and battle and retreat, and all the brave men who were gathering to follow him felt that the commander they so loved and trusted was exceedingly wide awake.

The celerity and accuracy with which his instructions were obeyed bore witness to his wakefulness. At three o’clock he was on horseback, near Fort St. Charles, in the

lower part of the city, watching the thin columns of the army which he had created, as they marched past him, on their way to a battle with a superior force. Rarely has any general reviewed so heterogeneous an array. It consisted of nearly nine hundred United States regular infantry, artillery, and marines; companies of Louisiana planters, French, mainly, with a few Spaniards; Tennessee and Mississippi volunteers, mounted or on foot; New Orleans clerks and merchants, as full of fight as they could hold; a battalion of two hundred and ten colored men, and a band of eighteen Choctaw Indians. In all, two thousand, one hundred and thirty-one men. This force was to attack sixteen hundred veteran British regulars under General Keane, in a strong position, with heavy reënforcements understood to be only a short march behind them.

The city was necessarily left almost ungarrisoned, but strong detachments of Tennessee and Kentucky riflemen were near, and would soon arrive. The military meaning of this seemingly rash sortie of General

Jackson was simply that the British advance must be checked until their arrival, or New Orleans was lost.

Hardly had the fighting men departed, however, before the darkest kind of gloom settled over the city. There was a panic among the people. Even before General Jackson departed, delegations of terror-stricken men and women came to him for encouragement, and he gave it to them. There were good reasons for their alarm. There was nothing absurd in it. The only really ludicrous incident of the British invasion, thus far, had been the posting up, here and there, and other circulation, of a sounding proclamation signed by General Keane and by Admiral Cochrane, in command of the fleet, as follows:—

“Louisianians! Remain quietly in your homes! Your slaves shall be preserved to you, and your property respected. We make war only against Americans.”

As a practical commentary upon this very funny proclamation, General Keane’s soldiers had promptly plundered every house within

their reach, and they dined well that day upon "foraged" supplies, around blazing campfires made of the ruins of buildings and fences.

Steadily, but not rapidly, the American army moved forward. It was half-past four o'clock when the first small skirmish took place. Five mounted riflemen scouted too near the British lines, losing one horse killed, and two men wounded.

The darkness came, and the onward march continued. The gunboat *Carolina*, for she was little more, was anchored in the river, within range of the British camp. It was understood, all around the American forces, that the sound of her one gun, a twelve-pounder, was to be their signal for attacking.

Under the personal direction of General Jackson, his several divisions reached the positions assigned them. At half-past seven o'clock the gun of the *Carolina* roared its command to go forward, and it is said to have been an astonishment to the enemy. After their first shot, the sailors of the gunboat continued firing, hour after hour, with

no means of knowing how much or how little harm they were doing. They were compelled to direct their aim by the camp-fires or by the flashes of the British artillery that answered them.

Dan Martin was with Captain Hutton, following closely the rapid movements of the general. Hardly, however, had the signal gun spoken when the captain handed him a piece of paper, saying:—

“Life or death, my boy, take that to General Coffee. You couldn’t find your way back to-night. Stay with him!”

Away rode Dan on a Louisiana pony which had been provided him. Already the air was vibrating with the thunder of the British guns and the rattle of musketry volleys.

“Ki-a-wok and Sam are there,” he was thinking. “I know where General Coffee’s men are. It’s getting awfully dark. I must be halfway, though. Hullo!”

He had not dared to gallop fast, for fear of running into or over some of his own friends; but now his pony reared and bounded forward with a loud, shrill scream.

"She's hit, I'm afraid," said Dan.

Another wild scream followed the first, and then the poor stricken brute sank heavily to the ground. A random bullet had gone through her heart and all was over. Dan was instantly out of the saddle and on his feet, but, as he picked up his rifle, which he had dropped in coming down, a dismal idea was in his startled mind.

"No horse now, and yet I must get there, dead or alive. I may have to fight my way, but General Coffee must have this despatch. What's that? Hurrah! I wish he'd do it again. I'll go in that direction."

It had not been meant for him particularly, but out of the darkness far beyond him there came the unmistakable sound of a Seminole war-whoop.

"Red Shirt Joe," all but gasped Dan, as he ran on, looking out as well as he could for holes and fences. "I'll get there."

It was not an easy thing to do, but he was not long in doing it. Then he soon began to feel better, for General Coffee said:

"Thank you, my brave boy! You're a credit to your father!"

He read the despatch, and in another moment the half-frantic cheers of his excited Tennesseans responded to his loud announcement:—

"Jackson orders us to charge! Forward, men! Go right through 'em!"

Dan Martin was not surprised to find himself going forward side by side with Black Sam, and he had caught one fleeting glimpse of Red Shirt Joe.

"Hutton was right about one thing," Dan was thinking. "Nobody could find anybody else, just now. All we know is that the British are over yonder, somewhere, and we must go and find 'em."

It was a fairly correct description of the situation, and it would answer for both sides of the battle. All that the British officers could afterward say of the onset was that, almost before they knew it, the Americans were among them. It could hardly be called a general engagement, even then, for it consisted of a number of small but fierce

collisions, all along the line. Of the greater part of these, Dan Martin knew nothing at all; and the very men who were in them could afterward give only doubtful and confused accounts of their own doings. Dan's ears were almost deafened by the roar of cannon and the incessant reports of rifles and muskets all around him, the shouts of men and officers, and the groans of the wounded.

On went General Coffee's Tennesseans. Their order was broken now, and they were hardly able to distinguish friend from foe in a succession of short, desperate conflicts which followed.

"This is awful!" exclaimed Dan, as he and his two friends and a score more of the riflemen suddenly found themselves confronted by an orderly line of English bayonets. "They're two to our one!"

Not the less for that did the brawny backwoodsmen make their charge, and in a moment more there was made a curious military discovery. It was already known that an empty musket is inferior to a loaded

rifle. In spite of the darkness, some of the American bullets made hits, at that short distance. Then, however, it was found that, while the bayonet may be a deadly weapon in the daytime, with light by which to lunge and parry, in the gloom of night it is not quite equal to the long knife and the tomahawk.

United States regular army men found out nearly the same thing in some of their surprises by red warriors on the Western frontier.

"I wish General Jackson were here, with more men," was on Dan's lips, when he suddenly had to parry with his empty rifle a bayonet thrust which sharply scratched his left arm.

Down he went, and over him strode Black Sam, hatchet in hand. Down went the English soldier, but more were behind him.

"My pistols!" thought Dan. "This is the first use I've had for 'em."

"Shoot him, Massa Dan!" yelled Sam. "I's done foh!"

Dan fired as he lay, and his second pistol also was discharged as he sprang to his feet.

"Sam!" he shouted. "Are you hurt?"

The black man reeled and fell, and past him sprang the Seminole with a wild whoop, while the remaining British, of that squad, were falling back among the shadows.

From that time onward all was darkness and confusion; but the word was passing along rapidly among the Americans that the enemy had received heavy reënforcements, making an immediate retreat necessary.

There had been no defeat, no victory, for either side, but General Jackson had in this sharp manner convinced his antagonists that he was ready for them.

Their advance had been successfully met and checked. His own furious assertion had also been fulfilled, for General Keane's army had not slept on American soil, that night. No, indeed, they had not been permitted to sleep a wink.

It was nearly morning when Captain Hutton came riding up to the slowly retreating column of General Coffee's riflemen.

"Dan, my boy!" he shouted, as he saw

him with his arm in a sling. "Are you badly hurt?"

"No, sir," replied Dan, ruefully. "Not a bit, hardly. I was in the worst of it too. But I'm just sick about Black Sam. He's killed, sir."

"Sorry for that," said the captain.

"Yes, sir," said Dan; "I shot the soldier that bayoneted him. Red Shirt Joe killed two more. I reckon he feels bad about Sam, but he won't say anything."

"Hand to hand, was it?" said the captain. "So it was with us. I was afraid the general would get killed. He went right forward with the men."

It had seemed too great a risk for a commanding general to take, but he had not dared to trust to any leadership except his own the chances and changes of that weird night battle.

The British afterward reported their losses at two hundred and seventy-seven, killed, wounded, and missing. Those of the Americans were two hundred and thirteen, or every tenth man of all who marched out of the city that afternoon with General Jackson.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BARRIER OF FIRE

“GENTLEMEN, it is twelve o’clock!”

There were a number of persons present, and servants had been busily placing refreshments upon a table in the middle of the elegantly furnished room. This was not in New Orleans, but far away, across the Atlantic, in the ancient city of Ghent. The speaker was Mr. Todd, son-in-law of President Madison and one of the secretaries of the American Peace Commissioners. He had invited friends to luncheon with him on this 24th of December, 1814, and the chimes of the churches of Ghent were ringing for noon. The company stood still, looking at their host, for his face was a little pale and his manner was exceedingly earnest.

“Well, gentlemen,” he continued, “I an-

nounce to you that peace has been made and signed between America and England."

The war, therefore, was over; but at that hour Dan Martin was standing on the bank of the old Rodriguez Canal at New Orleans, watching a thousand workmen, black and white, who were plying picks and shovels. They were constructing a breastwork a mile long, across the plain, for here General Jackson had decided to meet and defeat the main body of the British army, whenever it should come forward. It was understood that General Pakenham had at last arrived to take command, bringing with him other generals of distinction.

"It's the queerest thing ever I saw," remarked Dan. "If they go down three feet they come to water. They have to bring most of their dirt in carts. — Hullo! Pierre Chanon, is that you?"

"'Dade an' it is, and I'm Pat Shannon the day, but I'm not handlin' a spade. It's not dirt alone they're bringin'. Look yonder! Cotton bales, begorra!"

Dan looked, and there they were, great

drays heaped with bales of cotton, to put into the breastwork. The United States afterward had to pay for two hundred and forty-five of them. They did not work well as a fortification, however, for the first British cannon balls that struck them set them on fire. The smoke they made was beyond endurance, and they all had to be taken out.

"Pat," said Dan, "where's Jean Lafitte?"

"Sorra one o' me knows," said Pat. "They say he's seen the ginerel. Onyhow the guns'll be well hondled. Two hundred of our best min'll be b'hint thim. I'm no gunner mesilf, but I'll do what I can wid a rifle. Me b'ye, Jean Lafitte has kept his word."

"That's more'n I thought he would," said Dan, but there was more than one side to the singular character of the ex-ruler of Barataria. At that moment he was standing in front of the general himself, near the other end of the line of rapidly heaping earth.

"General Jackson," he said, as if in answer to a question, "some of our men are already on duty. The rest are coming."

"Let them serve their country well," said

the general. "Nothing more will ever be required of them."

"It is their country," said Jean, with an appearance of deep feeling. "It is my country. The American flag is my flag, and over yonder is the red cross flag of England. You will find it a good thing for our side that your guns are pointed by the gunners of Grand Terre."

The general shook hands with him, heartily, but it was not a time for conversation; and Lafitte walked away, muttering to himself:—

"In his proclamation, he called us hellish banditti. I don't care! We're as good as hundreds of these other men that are here to keep the British from plundering New Orleans."

It is very likely that patriotism grows fast in the presence of an enemy, if it has any courage or war spirit to help it along, and the Baratarians were taking hold of their new duties with energy.

"Pat," said Dan Martin, "how our gunboats are banging away!"

“It’s the *Caroline* and the *Louisiana*, ye mane, out there in the river. Some of our gunners are on thim, and they’ll fire to hit. Ivery man o’ thim hates the British flag.”

That, of course, had something to do with their patriotism, and the same thing was true of all the Louisiana Frenchmen who were rallying so loyally and bravely to help General Jackson.

Reënforcements also from the North were arriving in considerable numbers. Some of them were in bad condition from long marching. Others were almost out of clothing. Hundreds were without arms, but every possible effort was making to get them in readiness for the great battle which was sure to come, — to come, because no news of the peace which had been signed at Ghent could reach these two armies in time to prevent their meeting.

Days more went by, and there were severe skirmishes at several points. It was not often that a busy headquarters’ errand boy could get out of the city for a look at the defences, although, every now and then, the

sound of heavy guns came to his ears, as if to say to him:—

“Why don’t you come out here and see what General Pakenham’s army is doing?”

He did not know until he rode out at sunrise of the morning of the 8th of January, with Captain Hutton.

Dan was now in a neat half uniform, and he no longer had to carry his scratched left arm in a sling.

“This is the last day, Dan,” said the captain, as they rode along. “The general is at the front. All skirmishing is over. The battle has come.”

“There’s been any quantity of skirmishing, sir,” said Dan. “We’ve lost the *Caroline* too. She was knocked all to pieces.”

“We can afford to lose her,” said Hutton. “Only one gun. They don’t know how many more we have, now, ready to sweep the level in front of the works. If they did know, I don’t believe they’d dream of attacking us in front.”

“Oh, sir!” exclaimed Dan. “Hark! It’s begun!”

“Gallop!” replied the captain. “That was a heavy gun from our own works. We must find the general. I’ve an important report to make.”

On they went, at speed. Dan already knew every yard of the breastworks and every cannon that was mounted to defend them. He knew that in some places the earthen embankment was twenty feet wide, on top, so that our riflemen would have a shelf to stand on when they were firing and could get down behind it to load. More than by even the largest cannon, however, had his admiration been given to a very tall flagstaff in the centre and to the largest Stars and Stripes banner he had ever seen, that floated there in full view of both armies. Of these it was pretty carefully estimated that General Pakenham had ten thousand men at the front, and General Jackson, counting all parts of his forces, about half as many. Any soldier could understand, therefore, that a British front line of three thousand men would have to charge at least equal numbers protected by a thick earthen wall. It was madness

to do so, and half the British army believed that it was to be defeated.

“Captain Hutton,” asked Dan, “are all the Baratarians at work here? what about the batteries at Grand Terre?”

“They are all here, I think,” said the captain, spurring his horse, “but the general sent men enough to hold Grand Terre. This is the only important point, though. There will be a hard fight, the general says, on the other side of the river. It won’t be of any consequence if we lose it or win it. Victory or defeat is right here.”

Dan was glad to gallop fast, and in a few minutes they were riding through the wide-spread camp of tents behind the lines. A heavy fog had covered the plain and the river at dawn. It was just as it lifted, a little, that the heavy gun had been fired which had quickened the movements of Dan and Captain Hutton.

As the white mist arose and began to float away, it had disclosed to thousands of eyes, which had been anxiously waiting, the brilliant array of the advancing British army, and

the sight was greeted by rousing cheers from end to end of the American lines, for General Jackson's forces were all awake and in their appointed places.

The general had not slept much, during many long days and nights, but he had been awakened at about midnight to receive a despatch from Commodore Patterson. He did not lie down again, but waited quietly, studying the meaning of other news that came. At a little after one o'clock, for he was looking at his watch when he spoke, he said to the officers who were with him:—

“Gentlemen, we have slept long enough. Rise! The enemy will be upon us in a few minutes! I must go and see Coffee.”

The fog, therefore, which might otherwise have concealed the British forward movement, was of no use to them.

For one moment Dan Martin and the captain reined in their horses to stare over the breastwork at the splendid military spectacle presented by the long lines and dense columns of the British veterans. They seemed to cover half the plains with a moving flood of red and steel.

“Magnificent!” shouted Captain Hutton. “Never before was there such a charge made in America. Not even during the Revolutionary War. Come on, Dan! There’s the general! He’s with the Kentuckians and Tennesseans. That means that he expects the British to reach them first.”

He had indeed given to his most trusted men what he considered the post of greatest danger,—and of honor. He now received his aide-de-camp’s report smilingly.

“We shall not need them,” he said, whoever he referred to. “We shall not be able to use half the troops we now have in line. The poor fellows out yonder are coming in to certain destruction.”

Dan heard, but he could not at once believe it, so soldierly, so numerous, so seemingly irresistible was the English force that was marching steadily forward.

The American cannon were already at work, including the broadsides of the *Louisiana*, over in the river. At several points the artillery fire was making gaps in the British columns, which were promptly filled up, and

the mass of steady veterans in front of Dan's position was as yet unbroken. It was under the command of General Gibbs.

"Where's General Jackson?" exclaimed Dan, glancing around him.

"Gone down the line!" said Captain Hutton. "General Carroll is in command here. He has his orders. I have mine. I must go. Stay here! Use your rifle! Dismount and go to the rampart!"

Away he rode, and in a moment more Dan was standing on the broad earthen shelf, one of a long line of excited Tennesseean sharpshooters. Beyond them was a similar line of Kentuckians under General Adair, and Dan could not have named the other defenders of that terrible mile long of waiting marksmen.

The cannon thundered ceaselessly. They had the range better now, and Dan shuddered as he saw the havoc they were beginning to make.

"Ugh!" growled a harsh voice that suddenly came to his side. "Big gun heap kill. Redcoat go down! Whoop!"

Two hundred yards may have been the

distance to the enemy's front when General Carroll shouted, "Fire!"

It seemed to Dan somewhat nearer, and he knew that a great many rifles of that day would not do good work at such a long range. The firing began, however, as the deadly marksmen deliberately picked out their human targets.

On, on, with courage never surpassed, came the serried lines of General Gibbs, but they were falling like grass before the scythe, and at about fifty yards they halted.

Dan Martin had loaded and fired like a boy in a dream, for the thought in his mind was:—

"They mean to charge right over us. We must stop them!"

He heard a wild outcry among them:—

"The fascines! The ladders! We can't cross the ditch without them!"

"I know what that is," thought Dan. "Bundles of brushwood to throw in and fill it up, for them to cross on. Ladders to mount the breastwork with. Oh! They are breaking!"

“Who-oo-oo!” Savagely fierce was the wild war-cry of Ki-a-wok, and he was reloading his rifle with a face that made Dan think of a demon.

Minutes passed, not many, and the British, heavily reënforced, were coming forward again, this time under the personal direction of General Pakenham himself.

The field in front of the breastwork was already thickly strewn with the dead and wounded, while over it lowered and scowled the thick clouds of powder smoke. At every point of that daring, desperate onset the result had been the same, and the return fire of the British seemed to be of no effect.

Again—again—the death-dealing American cannon, hurling showers of grape shot and canister.

Again the unerring aim of the cool and calculating riflemen.

Could any troops on the face of the earth fight on in face of such a fire?

“They can’t!” was the thought in Dan Martin’s mind, and he shuddered from head to foot as he added: “Of course they can’t.



The British, heavily reënforced, were coming forward again.

We have killed most of them. Oh! What's that?"

He himself was down, for a random musket ball had hit him on the right leg.

"Boy hurt?" said Red Shirt Joe, stooping to examine the wound. "No. Bullet tear leg, — no break bone. Joe tie 'em up. Ugh!"

Dan's handkerchief was at once bound carefully over the bullet gash, and the red man resumed his rifle practice. Dan then, with some difficulty, lifted his head to look out upon the battlefield. He could have seen much more of it, if he had been on horseback, like General Jackson, riding from point to point and searching the enemy's lines with a field-glass.

He would have seen confusion everywhere, rout, flight, ruin, for in front of the American barrier of fire lay no less than twenty-one hundred dead or wounded men, including three major generals, eight colonels and lieutenant colonels, and many officers of lower grades, for the mortality had been great among the gallant fellows who had stepped

on so fearlessly in advance of their fast-falling men. The British generals had died like heroes while vainly striving to rally their defeated army.

Hundreds of prisoners were yet to be gathered in, after all firing should cease; and the battle had lasted only twenty-five minutes from General Carroll's command, "Fire!" to the breaking of the last British regiment.

"It is all horrible!" exclaimed Dan, as he almost forgot the pain of his wound in gazing so intently at the awful scene out yonder. "There goes Joe! I saw him jump down and cross the ditch. I hope he won't murder any wounded men."

He had not heard the Seminole say:—

"Ugh! Crooked Knife. Ki-a-wok saw Creek chief! Kill him now! Whoop!"

"There!" said Dan. "Right in among 'em. Likely as not I'll never see him again."

A faint feeling came over him, and he fell back upon the rampart.

"Dan! My boy!" he heard. "How's this?"

"Father?" gasped Dan. "Are you here? I'm wounded just a little."

"God bless you, my poor fellow!" groaned Captain Martin, dropping on his knees beside his son. "Yes, I got to New Orleans this morning."

He examined the hurt anxiously, but the Seminole's skilful bandaging had checked the bleeding, and there was no occasion for alarm.

"I'm glad your mother doesn't know it, though," he said. "I had to come. I just couldn't stay at home any longer. I made out to fire a dozen shots too. There! That'll do."

"Father," said Dan, "are the British completely defeated?"

"They are beaten, my boy," replied his father. "Our guns are banging away yet, but the victory is ours. Hark! Hear those New Orleans brass bands playing 'Yankee Doodle'! Well they may. Their city is safe. The British'll never try this on us again. Do you suffer much pain, Dan?"

"I don't care!" groaned Dan. "That is, if it's a victory. How is mother? And Jim, and the girls?"

"They're all right," said his father. "I wish I knew where I could find a stretcher to carry you in on."

Stretchers for American wounded? Why, at that moment there were scores of them hunting all along the line for somebody to carry in. They could find only a dozen Americans, and so they went over the rampart and down into the ditch for wounded Englishmen. In the very ditch itself, in front of General Carroll's lines alone, they fished out nearly a hundred, so persistent had been the onward charge of those brave, ill-fated men.

"Stretcher!" shouted Captain Martin, loudly. "Bring one this way!"

"Here's one," responded a voice that Dan knew well, and in a moment more it added: "What? Captain Martin? Are you here? Bless my soul! Is there anything the matter with Dan?"

"Gun shot on leg, Hutton," responded

Captain Martin. "I must take him somewhere, — to some hospital."

"No! To my house! Take him to my own house, captain! I want the honor of the boy hero! He shall come with me! His father, too."

A handsome man, in the uniform of the Louisiana militia, was talking French enthusiastically, but he was well understood, and Hutton replied: —

"Thank you, Major Delatour. It will be just the right thing."

"O father!" gasped Dan at that moment, "General Jackson! I see him. It's the general himself. He isn't hurt, is he?"

"Captain Hutton!" shouted the general, tightening the rein of the somewhat excited horse that was under him. "The brave boy has fainted. I want you now! Hullo! Captain Martin! My brave old comrade! God be praised! This victory ends the war."

"It ought to, general," said Captain Martin. "Dan isn't badly hurt."

"He is going to the Delatour mansion,"

broke in Captain Hutton. "General, I have that report ready."

"Mount, then!" said the general. "Make it as we go along. Captain Martin, I'll see you again. I'll come and see Dan. Thank you, Major Delatour. Hutton, we've our hands full. The enemy must be followed to the shore!"

Away they rode, for there is a great deal to be done after a battle, and two-thirds of the British army was still in perfect fighting order. Nevertheless, it was not the victory at New Orleans, so terrible, so costly, that put an end to the war. It was the treaty that was so noiselessly signed at Ghent.

"Dan, my dear fellow, are you feeling better now?" said his father, anxiously, as the wounded boy's eyes opened again.

"I feel first-rate," whispered Dan.

"Major Delatour!" exclaimed Captain Martin. "His mother would thank you as I do."

"No, no!" exclaimed the patriotic French-American. "The favor is to me. My wife will care for him as if she were Madame Martin."

It was an hour for enthusiasms. The American soldiers were doing themselves honor by their treatment of their wounded or captured enemies. No less than six brawny Tennesseans were shoving each other aside in their eagerness to aid in carrying Dan. They put him upon the stretcher tenderly, and, as they were doing so, they heard his father mutter:—

“That’s a fact! His mother won’t know anything about it until long after he gets well. And won’t she be proud of him then?”

“You bet she will!” said one of the men. “He was shootin’ away, right on top o’ the rampart.”

“He was taking his father’s place,” said Captain Martin. “I shall know that there’s one more brave soldier to fight for my country after I am gone. Did you hear General Jackson say?—I heard him, just now, as he rode off—‘Thank God for the boys of America!’”

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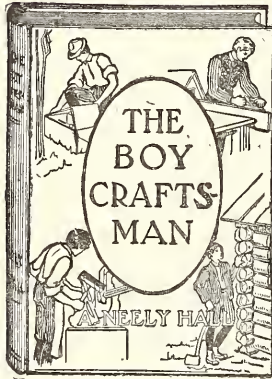
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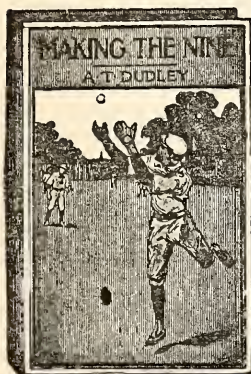
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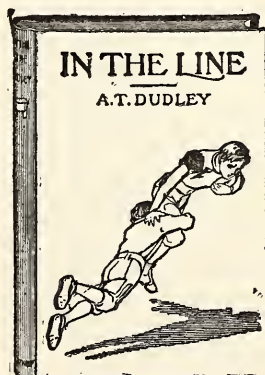
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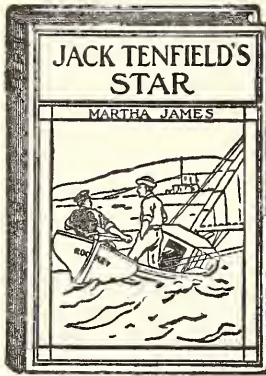


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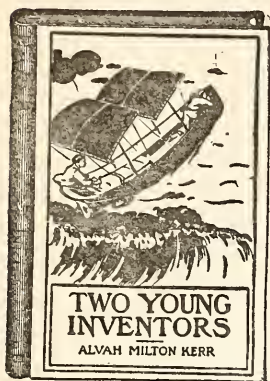
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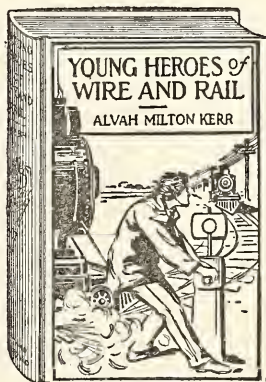
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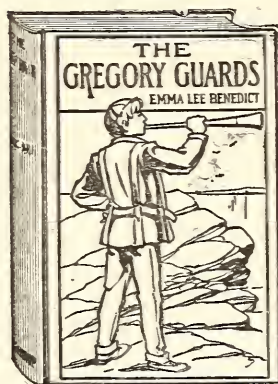
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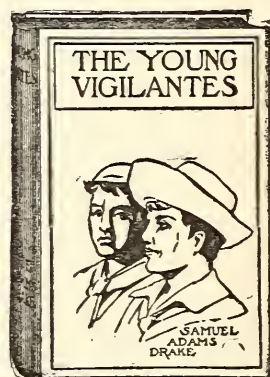
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